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HANDKERCHIEFS FROM PAUL .



LONDON : HUMPHREY MILFORD

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

# Handkerchiefs from Paul

BEING

PIOUS AND CONSOLATORY VERSES

OF

PURITAN MASSACHUSETTS

INCLUDING

UNPUBLISHED POEMS

By BENJAMIN TOMPSON, JOHN WILSON *and*  
ANNA HAYDEN

Together with other Poems by  
SAMUEL TORREY *and* SAMUEL DANFORTH  
*and* JOHN WILSON

*Reprinted from Rare Originals*

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Edited with Introduction and Notes by  
KENNETH B. MURDOCK

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CAMBRIDGE  
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TO  
L. E. P. M.



## Preface

SHORTLY after the publication of Professor H. J. Hall's "Benjamin Thompson, His Poems" in 1924, Mr. C. E. Goodspeed of Boston called my attention to a manuscript journal kept by Joseph Thompson of Billerica, brother to Benjamin, the poet. Examination showed that this contained copies of eleven poems written in Massachusetts before 1715. These poems are the nucleus of this book. Three are by Benjamin Thompson, and two of these have never been printed before. Five others, by Anna Hayden and John Wilson, seem also to be published now for the first time. The other three, by Samuel Torrey and Samuel Danforth, have been printed, but one of them has masqueraded hitherto either as an anonymous work or as one by Thompson, whereas the manuscript copy shows that its author was Danforth. With the eleven poems from Joseph Thompson's journal are reprinted John Wilson's most ambitious work, the "Song of Deliverance," and some others of his verses which do not appear to have seen the light since they were first published more than two hundred years ago. Finally there are included the verses written by Danforth for the Massachusetts almanacs of 1647, 1648, and 1649, which are now almost unknown because of the extreme rarity of the pamphlets in which they were issued. "Hand-

kerchiefs from Paul," therefore, comprises seven unpublished poems of early Massachusetts, two of them by Benjamin Tompson, together with reprints of another poem by him and of several others by Wilson, Torrey, and Danforth. The title, as will be clear to anyone who reads the foreword to the "Song of Deliverance," is a phrase used by John Wilson the younger to describe his father's verses. Its appropriateness not only to them, but also to most of the other poems in this book, is obvious.

The Tompson journal was handed down in the Tompson family, coming eventually into the possession of Dr. Isaac Hurd, who married Joseph Tompson's great-grand-daughter. After her husband's death, in 1844, the manuscript went to a private collector, and was finally purchased by Mr. Goodspeed. His generosity and that of another friend of the Harvard College Library have made possible its acquisition by that institution.

The poems printed from the manuscript are exactly transcribed from it, except for the following changes. There is no consistency in the capitalization of the original, but the first letter of each line has been printed as a capital, to accord with modern conventions. In the interests of intelligibility, punctuation, which is almost wholly lacking in the manuscript, has been supplied. The modern form of the letter "s" has been substituted for the long form often used in the original. In a few cases, defects in

the manuscript have made necessary the addition of letters or words, but these are printed between small brackets ([ ]).

The text of the poems taken from printed originals follows those originals in all details, except for the use of the modern form of the letter "s." Anyone curious as to the whims and eccentricities of colonial printers will find them here faithfully reproduced.

The notes to the poems are not exhaustive. They are intended simply to shed light on passages which might otherwise be obscure, and, here and there, to indicate points of interest in connection with the authors' methods and aims.

For help in the preparation of the Introduction and Notes, I owe much to many friends. I am particularly grateful to Professor George L. Kittredge, to Mr. Lawrence S. Mayo, to Mr. Goodspeed, who first showed the manuscript to me, and to the authorities of the Harvard College Library who have allowed me to print the poems which that document contains.

K. B. M.

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

June, 1927





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# Introduction

## I

### *Joseph Tompson and his Journal*

**I**N his old age Joseph Tompson of Billerica used sometimes to take up a little manuscript volume in which for years he had kept his journal. Often as he read there came back to him memories of his beloved wife, Mary, who, more than thirty years before, had left him to mourn her death and that of her unborn child, and no less poignant recollections of a daughter, who had died in her youth, and of his father, William Tompson, in his day famous among the first divines of the Bay Colony. So from reading he often turned to writing, and in his crabbed hand copied into the journal several poems written to lament the death of certain members of his family whose memory he loved to honor. The verses were for him "memorialls and epitaphs upon my Deare." In transcribing them he unwittingly preserved for posterity a little collection of early New England verse, most of which would otherwise have perished.

Ordinarily it is easier to be sure of the feeling and purpose which go into the making of a poem, than of its success among the readers for whom it was designed. Not the least interesting feature of the verses which Joseph Tompson copied into his jour-

nal, is that we know precisely how they affected one of those for whose delectation they were written. To Tompson the poems were alive. They were almost sacred, because they expressed, fittingly as it seemed to him, the reverence and affection he felt but could not express. He found a "soule satisfiing delight" in reading them, and in "pondering & writeing and remembring afresh my Dear father and his Contemporaries with him." John Wilson, Benjamin Tompson, and the other authors of the poems, wrote them to do honor to the dead, and to console the living. That Joseph Tompson, years later, found solace in their lines, testifies to their success.

He copied the poems between 1712 and 1723. New England had changed, but his journal reveals him as a man closer in spirit to Winthrop than to Franklin. A Puritan to the core, he looked back to his father, to Richard Mather, John Cotton, John Wilson, and the other founders of Massachusetts Puritanism, as to sainted figures. Gladly he read the books which they had read, and thought as they had thought. He was far enough from Boston to be hardly aware of signs which seemed to others to prove that New England was entering upon degenerate days, with an old faith fast falling into disrepute among new ideas which were fraught with peril. Narrow-minded he was, no doubt, and perhaps unadmirable in his allegiance to the past. But he was sincere. Not a divine, not a college graduate, but

simply a good citizen of a country town, he was by no means badly educated, and as well read as the scanty leisure left him by his public duties permitted him to be. The first schoolmaster in Billerica, he taught there for more than thirty years. By 1723, when he was eighty-three, he could look back, not only on his teaching career, but upon a record of ten years as Town Clerk and of thirty years as Selectman. He had risen to a captaincy in the local militia, and the town records display the extent and variety of his labors for the place which was his home from 1662 until his death in 1732.<sup>1</sup>

There were many such men in colonial and provincial Massachusetts — Puritans, men of little formal education, blind to progress because out of touch with new ideas, but making amends for much by steadfast service based on the belief that a useful life, as nearly as might be in accord with the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount, sufficed in the eyes of God. There were many such, and in their lives and works, quite as much as in the

<sup>1</sup> See H. A. Hazen, *History of Billerica*, pp. 253, 254, 304, 305; *Idem.*, (Genealogical Register), pp. 148, 149. In 1660, according to Hazen (p. 60), the town of Billerica accepted as an inhabitant Joseph Tompson from Braintree. In his journal, however, Tompson says that after his marriage, which was in 1662, "it pleased the Lord by his good hand of providenc to remoue my habitation from whear i was borne and brought up & brought me unto Billerika." But, according to Hazen, he had a house-lot there as early as 1660. Probably he decided to go to Billerica, acquired land there, and was accepted as an inhabitant before his marriage, after which he settled permanently in his new abode.

achievements of more famous divines and politicians, is written the early history of the Puritan colonies. It is a pity that we have but meagre records of what men like Joseph Thompson believed and did, what they experienced, and what was the faith, the dream, that kept them from stagnation and despair. Even if it did not contain the poems, Thompson's diary would be worth a glance, simply because it adds a mite to our knowledge of how the pioneer New Englander thought and felt.

No one is likely to regard the journal as a literary work. None the less, it reveals a man who was, no doubt, representative of a large, perhaps the largest, class in the Massachusetts of his day. He frankly admired the elegies written in celebration of members of his family, and he was moved by them. If we are not, it is salutary to remember that they were written not for us but for him — not for twentieth-century critics but for staunch Puritans, men who were, according to their lights, good Christians, and who judged poetry by standards which were valid for them even though they are rejected by us. Massachusetts in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries offered to most of her citizens little time for *belles lettres*. In June, 1724, Joseph Thompson prefaces an entry in his journal by offering an explanation of his taking time for such pursuits: "this day being the after part of the day taken of from my business abroad by reason of the rain." There is

pathos in this, and enlightenment for us. At eighty-five, Tompson was still a busy man, and of him, as of his contemporaries, the every-day problems of existence demanded far more than they do of their descendants. Then, if one would write or read, one must choose an afternoon when rain drove one home. Of course, the divines might spend long hours in their studies, but they were occupied with the needs of their churches, and with their quest for theological truth. Poetry, if written at all in such an environment, could hardly be regarded as an end in itself. If a poem could edify or console, it deserved to be brought forth, but there were few New Englanders before 1750 who felt that they could afford to write verse with other motives.

If Joseph Tompson's journal gives a hint as to the audience for which colonial poets wrote, and a clue to the handicaps under which they worked, it also explains much in their choice of themes. Hardships were great for colonists. Sickness and death must have been more awful then than now — at least, more woven into the tissue of daily experience. Doctors were few, hospitals unknown, and long winters, bad roads, and little-understood diseases all contributed to make both frequent and tragic those domestic dramas in which the Puritan felt himself closest to the inscrutable power of God, and most helpless beneath His relentless hand. It was no accident and no mere product of Calvinism, that the



colonist thought so much, and, if he wrote at all, wrote so much of death. He needed no stimulus beyond the bitter memory of some long vigil of prayer beside the bed of a sick child, with the doors blocked by snow, no doctor within reach, and no remedy save faith in the ultimate benevolence of God. When such scenes ended in death, it was safest to believe that this world is but a beginning, and that to leave it is to find release.

Joseph Tompson had to record his full share of tragedy. He saw sickness; he saw death, and, in words which for all their crudity strove valiantly against the inarticulateness of a man inexperienced with the pen, he wrote many pages which still echo with inescapable pathos. It is easy to condemn Calvinism, and to call Puritan introspection morbid, but it is hard to read a narrative like Tompson's without feeling that cant and hypocrisy are foreign to it. His record demands whatever sympathy may be vouchsafed to deep feeling and robust faith. Nor is it difficult to see why the poems he reverently copied into his diary were more to him than rather unsatisfactory excursions into verse. For all their lack of art, they were as sincere as he. When they spoke of Heaven, of spiritual consolation, of God, they spoke of things which were intensely real to their readers and readily visualized by them. Two centuries afterward it may be hard to catch the ring of true emotion in the labored lines, but this is not

only because they are phrased imperfectly but also because the things with which they deal are less clearly pictured now than then. This is not to say, of course, that all of them were written without regard for art. We do not accept their authors' definitions of "grace," "wit," and "good versifying," and our conventions as to the poetical expression of emotion are not theirs. But it is only generous to admit that they may have had standards and conventions no less rigid than ours. It would be unjust to find their means always unworthy; it would be worse than foolish to read unmindful of their spirit.

## II

### *The Tompson Family — The Subjects of the Poems*

All the poems in the Tompson journal were written on the occasions of deaths in the Tompson family. They are, therefore, personal in tone, and cannot be rightly read without some knowledge of the individuals with whom they were concerned.

The first of them, "A short memoriall & Reuiew," eulogizes "that exemplary Christian, Mary Tompson, who Dyed in March 22: 1679." She was Joseph Tompson's first wife, whom he married at Braintree, where he and she had been children together, on July 22, 1662. She was then Mary Bracket, the twenty-year old daughter of Deacon Richard

Bracket.<sup>1</sup> She does not stand out in the meagre genealogical records of the family, but in her husband's diary there are some graphic pages devoted to her. Of her death he wrote, "Tru it is, had i known what i quicly after & sadly knew, i should not haue Gone from her. i Came in to see her & saw her much spent. She gaue me her hand & bad me farewell & told me yt god would prouide for me & mine. What I herd & saw sent me in to secret to Cry unto god. What answer I had, the lord knows or my soule knows — suporting, sustaining mercy from ye Lord, i hope; generall gracious expressions, & Christian like, that she expressed then in her extremity, acknowledging her one [own] uilenes & worthlesness in her selfe but good hope through grace to stand before the fathr, haueing the righteousnes of Christ imputed to her & sometimes telling of them Christian friends about her that she was going to iesus Christ. Haueing given good testimony of her acceptance with y<sup>e</sup> fathr — through a mediatour — it pleased the Lord after a few hours weakness that this Dear precious Saint Closed her eyes & Resigned her soule, together with the fruit of her womb, into the arms of Death. The soule of both, as i haue good Reson to hope, being garded into abrahams Bosome.

<sup>1</sup> In copying the poem into his journal, Tompson gave the date of his wife's death as March 22, but later in the same journal he gave it as Sunday morning, March 23. *The Vital Records of Billerica* (1908) say March 23. Probably this date, which was a Sunday in 1679, is correct. Mary Tompson was born in Braintree, February 1, 1642.

And here — O here what may i say? This Deare Bosumb friend . . . this morn, March 23, 167<sup>8</sup>, about one or two on the Sabath morn, is at once dismissed from sorow, sin, & trouble, her prayers speedd & answered, & is this Sabbath triumphing, while her poore Consort is biterly lamenting.” Two weeks later he wrote: “As it Concerns my pore Children i Dare not so far giue way to that wofull Distrust in mine own wretched hart as to say that their loss together with mine own is an irreparable loss.” He thought of “the want of her prayer” and of “her daily nurture & instruction” of her children. She had tried to “traîne them up to know god & themselves.” Her husband mourned the loss of “her singular judgement & prudence in the disposing of them either for Callings or for maryage, besides her abillity to haue trained them up, especially her Daughters, in the use of her needle, which she was exeding expert in, & by which she not only saued but brought in much.” What wonder that he added with a touch of bitterness, “But now hopes are Dashed upon those acompts.” She had been “A Dear Christian, a loue of piety, a soule friend, a loueing neighbour, a tender mother, & a Dear Dutifull wife — a wife Careing for me, studying to make my life Comfortable to me, as far as she Could — nay, yt which was too much for her, willing to spend & to be spent for me. O that weight of Care that she Constantly took in my pore family — her sole [soul]

Care for the good of all, & outward Care, her exed-ing industry & prudence, who by her wisdom builded the house, kept me exedingly out of Debt — & the Lord blessed her Care wonderfully.” And then, “in her absents exeding lonely,” Joseph Tompson recorded that “the benifit of her Company was euer desirable — her Countenance to me exceding louely.”

On her deathbed, poor Mary Tompson acknowledged her own dissatisfaction with herself. Doubtless she spoke as she felt, conscious how far she had fallen short of what she believed God would have had her be, but perhaps she based her hope for Heaven on the knowledge that she had tried bravely to do her task on earth. Puritan wives were not given to questing for individual achievement. It was for men to study, preach, trade, and fight, and such worldly prizes as there were, fell to them. Mary Tompson, like many another Massachusetts wife of her time, measured success not by fame but by the rewards to be found in a family well-housed, clothed, and fed, with sons trained to help some day in the work of the colony, while their sisters at spinning-wheel and loom served less gloriously at home. A word of praise from her husband might outweigh much toil, and that “her Company was euer desirable” to him, and her face lovely in his eyes, must have been, if she was allowed to know it, enough to fulfil some of her fondest dreams.



To Mary and Joseph Tompson there were born "seuerall sweet branches." Two of them were still-born, a third died with the mother, but Mary, the eldest, who saw the light in 1663, grew up to marry that "worthy person," Philemon Dane of Ipswich. Four years after her marriage she died, leaving one child, who lived but twelve months after her. Joseph, the second child of Joseph and Mary Tompson, "Died soone of the small pox after his Coming home from the takeing of port Royall." Abigail, his sister, born in 1668, married John Watkins, of Charlestown and, after his death, Joshua Scottow of Charlestown. She died in 1733. William, the next child, was born in 1670, and in 1694 "ended his Days in his fathers howse, a single person, about fowre or five an[d] twenty, Cut down in his flower, & left a good testimony behind him." Deborah, the youngest of the family, married John Hartwell of Billerica, and outlived her father.<sup>1</sup>

On March 17, 1681, Joseph Tompson married as his second wife, Mary Denison, the daughter of Edward Denison of Roxbury. She was twenty-seven and he was forty. Their first child, Edward, was born in January, 1684, and died before 1727. The second, Benjamin, namesake of the poet, was born

<sup>1</sup> For the genealogical data in this paragraph see the *Vital Records of Billerica*; S. A. Bates, *Records of the Town of Braintree*, p. 643; *Vital Records of Ipswich*, ii, 123; T. B. Wyman, *Genealogies and Estates of Charlestown*, ii, 851, 1000; Hazen (*Genealogical Register*), pp. 148, 149, and Joseph Tompson's journal.

in 1686. Next was Elizabeth, born June 29, 1688, and last came Mary, born in the early winter of 1691.<sup>1</sup>

It was Elizabeth, the next to the youngest of these "sweet branches," who was the subject of the second and fourth poems in her father's journal. She never married, and on August 24, 1712, died in Boston. She was an "amiable uirgin," beloved of her family. For the rest, she is to-day but a name.<sup>2</sup>

The third poem in the journal, an "Anagram" by John Wilson, was written "upon the Death of Mr<sup>s</sup> Abigaill Tompson, And sent to her husband in uirginia while he was sent to preach the gospell y<sup>r</sup>." Joseph Tompson was her son, and at the head of his copy of the poem he wrote in two places, "my Dear mother, my Dear mother." Except that she married William Tompson in England before 1637, and died in Braintree in 1643, nothing is known of her, and even her maiden name seems not to have been discovered.<sup>3</sup>

Her husband, William Tompson, father of Benjamin the poet, and of Joseph, the writer of the journal, is better revealed in colonial annals. Born about 1597, probably in Lancashire, he matriculated at

<sup>1</sup> *Vital Records of Roxbury*, i, 101; *Vital Records of Billerica*, and Hazen (*Genealogical Register*), pp. 148, 149.

<sup>2</sup> The *Vital Records of Billerica*, and Hazen, give the date of her death as August 24. In one place in his journal Tompson gives the date as August 24, and in another as August 22. Probably the former is correct.

<sup>3</sup> Savage, *Genealogical Dictionary*, iv, 289.

Brasenose College, Oxford, in 1619, left the university without a degree, and thereafter preached for some years in Winwick Parish in Lancashire. He came to the colonies in 1637, and sat in the Synod of that year in Boston. Hubbard says that he preached for a time at Agamenticus. In 1639, he became minister at Braintree. Three years later, in response to a call from Virginia, he, with another Massachusetts missionary and one from New Haven, set out to preach to "well disposed people of the upper new farms" of the elder colony. The governing powers of Virginia were not in a cordial mood toward non-conformists, and Tompson and his companions were not permitted to stay. Before the end of 1643 he was at home again. His wife died during the winter of his absence.<sup>1</sup>

On him were written the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth poems in Joseph Tompson's diary. There are at least two others in his honor, one in the *Magnalia*, and one in Johnson's *Wonder-Working Providence*. He provoked poetic flights because he was one of the first divines in Massachu-

<sup>1</sup> 3 *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, viii, 249; *Publications of Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, xxv, 18; *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, xv, 112, 113; Savage, iv, 289; E. Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence*, passim; William Hubbard, *History of New England* (1848), pp. 276, 410, 411; J. Winthrop, *History of New England* (1853), ii, 93, and H. J. Hall, *Benjamin Tompson, His Poems*, pp. 2 ff. Tompson was in 1624 Curate of Newton in the Parish of Winwick, Lincs. See W. F. Irvine, *Marriage Licenses in the Dioceses of Chester*, ii, 194.

setts, famous as a learned writer and public servant, and, probably, even more because there were hints of mystery and tragedy in his life. In the words of Nathaniel Morton, "Old age coming upon him, and the prevailing of his melancholy distemper, did in a manner wholly disable him from . . . service . . . and Satan taking advantage thereby, he was under sad desertions and trouble of spirit."<sup>1</sup> Cotton Mather devotes most of his brief "Life of Mr. William Thompson" in the *Magnalia* to a discussion of "the Vexations of that *Melancholy*" which afflicted his subject. "*Satan*," he says, "who had been after an extraordinary manner irritated by the Evangelic Labours of this Holy Man, obtained the liberty to *sift* him; and hence, after this Worthy Man had served the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Church of our New-English *Braintree*, he fell into that *Balneum Diaboli*, a black *Melancholy*, which for divers Years almost wholly disabled him for the Exercise of his Ministry. . . . It is an Observation of no little Consequence, in our Christian Warfare, that for all the fierce *Temptations* of the Devil upon us, there is a *Time* limited; an *Hour of Temptation*. During this *Time*, the Devil may grow the more furious upon us, the more we do *Resist* him." But there is a "Passage of the Apostle, *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*. And as our Lord, being Twice more furiously *Tempted* by the Devil, *Drew near to God*, with *Extraordinary Prayer*;

<sup>1</sup> N. Morton, *New England's Memorial* (1826), p. 324.

but when the *Time* for the *Temptation* was out, God by his *Angels* then sensibly *drew near* unto him, with fresh Consolations: To this, no doubt, the Apostle refers, when he adds, *Draw nigh to God, and he shall draw nigh to you.* Accordingly, the Pastors and the Faithful, of the Churches in the Neighborhood, kept *Resisting of the Devil*, in his cruel Assaults upon Mr. *Thompson*, by continually *Drawing near to God*, with ardent Supplications on his Behalf: and by *praying always*, without *Fainting*, without *Ceasing*, they saw the *Devil* at length *Flee from him*, and God himself *Draw near* unto him, with unutterable Joy."

William Thompson's malady might, no doubt, be defined in terms of modern science, but "melancholia," "neurasthenia," "complex" — or Mather's diagnosis of "*Blood . . .* disordered with some Fiery *Acid*" — make no clearer the essential fact. Thompson was given to despondency, and he, like everyone else, saw in this a proof that Satan was at odds with him. That monarch is vividly portrayed in what has just been quoted — a fiend who, quite naturally annoyed by the activities of a godly divine, dogged his footsteps until he could take him unawares, only to be frustrated at length by God, who had listened to the petitions of His loyal followers in Braintree, Massachusetts. There was color in this, and Mather was not the only man to see it. Thompson's illness was not mere illness; it was a duel with the Evil One. A poem in the *Magnalia* is called, "Remarks on the

*Bright* and the *Dark Side*, of that *American Pillar*, The Reverend Mr. *William Thompson*," and the contrast of light and shade must have appealed to all who would celebrate his tormented spirit. There was danger, too, lest a minister, wounded by Satanic assaults, might appear thereby less godly, less to be revered. Mere praise of Thompson was not enough: to do his duty a Puritan poet must write of him in such a way as not only to make clear that he had been in hand-to-hand conflict with the King of Darkness, but also to emphasize the final salvation and triumph of the harassed divine. All this explains the verses in Thompson's memory, and makes more intelligible what they contain. Until the state of mind of those who interpreted nervous disease as warfare with the devil, is appreciated, it is hard to see how much of the dramatic there was in the poems on Thompson.

He died on December 10, 1666. Mercifully he had been given strength to conquer his fears and doubts, so that Mather could say, "The *End* of that Man is *Peace!*" He was survived by his second wife, Anna Crosby, whom he had married about 1647, and by four sons and two daughters. Of these, all but the youngest, Anna, were children by his first wife.<sup>1</sup>

Benjamin, the youngest son, was to become more famous than any of his brothers or sisters — more

<sup>1</sup> *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, xv, 113, 115; Bates, p. 633.



famous, indeed, in his time, than his father. He is still remembered as "the first native-born poet of America." The Tompson journal contains one poem written to mourn his death, and three which he wrote himself. His verses have been collected and reprinted in a modern edition, but two of the poems in the journal were then undiscovered, and are now printed for the first time. Most of what is known of his life has been written more than once, and the admirable introduction by his latest editor, Professor Hall, in his *Benjamin Tompson, His Poems*, leaves nothing to be added as to the poet's biography. Born in 1642, just before his father left for Virginia, he graduated from Harvard twenty years later. He was for most of his life a school-teacher, but he found time to become a physician as well as a pedagogue, and, withal, to write better verse than his contemporaries. If one reads New England colonial poetry, one finds no one save the English-born Anne Bradstreet, and, perhaps, Samuel Danforth, who comes nearer than he to mastery in verse.

As for the poems in this volume which do not come from the Tompson journal, their subjects require little discussion. The Gunpowder Plot, the defeat of the Armada, and the other "providences" related in Wilson's *Song of Deliverance* loom large in history, and he who runs may read of them. Little Samuel Danforth, first-born of Samuel Danforth and John Wilson's daughter, Mary, died when



he was six months old, and his grandfather's lines upon him offer rather a somewhat heroic prescription for remedying grief than any attempt to picture a human infant. John Harvard, celebrated in Wilson's Latin poem, is still famous, though not much is known of the details of his biography. The poem is disappointing in that it tells so little that is specific in its eagerness to enlarge upon general virtues.<sup>1</sup> Joseph Brisco plays no great part in colonial history, and it may be that except for the suddenness of his death by drowning he might never have emerged at all from the oblivion which has swallowed up most other Boston laymen of his time.

Shepard and Norton are comparatively conspicuous in colonial annals. Both were divines of William Thompson's generation, both were English-born as he was, and, like him, both were active leaders in colonial meeting-houses.

John Norton died on Sunday, April 5, 1663, so suddenly as to shock his friends. Wilson's elegy upon him is in large part, therefore, a discussion of sudden death. But he, like Nathaniel Morton, writing later, honored Norton as "not only a wise steward of the things of Jesus Christ, but also a wise statesman." It was in the dual rôle of minister and politician that Norton shone. A Cambridge graduate, he came to New England in 1635, bringing

<sup>1</sup> Savage, ii, 8; for Harvard, see, for example, H. C. Shelley, *John Harvard and his Times*.

with him a considerable reputation won in Puritan circles abroad. First at Plymouth, then at Ipswich, and finally as John Cotton's successor in Boston, he gave proof of his abilities as a divine. In 1646 he was appointed an agent of the colony to serve its political interests in England. He never actually went upon this mission, but in 1662 he did undertake a similar embassy, and had an audience with Charles II. As any prudent colonial agent must have done, he conceded more to the royal power than the colonists were ready to grant, and it is probable that the chagrin he felt in thus incurring the disapprobation of some of his countrymen, hastened his death. Politics aside, however, he served Massachusetts well. Early in his career he conducted a public debate with a French friar, in which he showed himself as skilled and learned as his adversary; in 1645 he published a Latin answer to a series of questions on Congregational church government, submitted by Apollonius, and, at the request of the General Court, he produced an able answer to the unorthodox views of redemption held by William Pynchon. As a controversialist his success was great; it is unfortunate for his later fame that his wit and learning are displayed only in books the subjects of which are no longer current concerns, or which were directed against such intruders in the colony as the Quakers, whom Norton was unable to regard with the tolerant attitude which at our safe distance we find

it possible to maintain. An admirer in his time wrote:

*Lombard* must out of Date; we now profess  
*Norton*, the *Master of the Sentences*;  
 Scotus, a *Dunce* to him; should we compare  
*Aquinas*, here, none to be named are.

Of a more *Heavenly* Strain his Notions were,  
 More pure, Sublime, Scholastical, and clear.  
 More like th' Apostles *Paul* and *John*, I wist,  
 Was this our *Orthodox Evangelist*.

In spite of this, and in spite of Norton's book, *The Orthodox Evangelist*, to which it alludes, posterity has chosen to set not only Aquinas but even Duns Scotus higher than Norton. But, in the days when Boston mourned his loss, and Wilson wrote an elegy upon him — even in the days when Joseph Tompson copied it lovingly into his journal — relative values were differently judged.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas Shepard was a friend of Norton, both in Old England and New. The two men came to the colonies together in 1635, when both were twenty-nine. Shepard had turned from Cambridge, where he took his M.A. in 1627, to Earl's-Colne, Essex, where he preached as the incumbent of a lectureship said to have been established by John Wilson's brother. His Puritanism was too decided to be veiled, and in 1630 he was suspended from his minis-

<sup>1</sup> See W. B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, i, 54-59; Morton, p. 298; C. Mather, *Magnalia*, book 3, part i, chap. 2, paragraph 22.

try. Daring to return to Earl's-Colne, he was summoned again before an episcopal court, and was ordered to leave the town. He took refuge as a chaplain in a gentleman's household, and eventually began to hold forth publicly again, only to come once more into official disfavor. Clearly England could no longer afford him a chance to preach, and accordingly he joined Norton in his westward pilgrimage. He settled in Massachusetts at Newtown, later Cambridge, and became the leader of the first church there. Though he was "a poore weake pale complexioned man," he spent freely such strength as he had, so that one who profited by his ministry declared, "Unless it had been four years living in Heaven, I know not how I could have more cause to bless God with Wonder than for those Four Years." He wrote much, as Norton did, but the root of his influence in his own day is probably best expressed in a "distick" from a Latin poem by one of his admirers, which has been translated as:

His name and office sweetly did agree,  
Shepard by name and in his ministry.

It is not surprising that his death in 1649 moved Wilson to write, though even his holiness and learning do not seem to-day sufficient provocation for the extraordinarily thorough anagrammatizing to which his colleague in Boston subjected his name. Wilson, however, lacking other and better means of paying his tribute, saw his anagrams not as exercises of

empty wit nor as mere "torturing of one poor word ten thousand ways," but rather as suitable, if not wholly worthy, offerings at the shrine of a beloved pioneer.<sup>1</sup>

### III

#### *The Authors of the Poems*

The poems in the Tompson journal represent the work of five authors, some of whose other efforts are also here reprinted. One of them was Benjamin Tompson, already mentioned; three were ministerial colleagues of William Tompson; and one was that rarer thing in colonial literature, an amateur poetess. She composed a poem on the death of her "dear brother," Benjamin Tompson. Joseph Tompson calls her "my deare sister Anna from brantry [Braintree]." Elsewhere in his diary he has copied a letter from one Anna Haiden (or Hayden) of Braintree, whom he calls his sister. This, together with what can be inferred from the genealogies, makes it safe to say that the poetess was Anna (or Hannah) Tompson, daughter of William Tompson by his second wife. She was born in 1648, and, some time before 1679, married Ebenezer Hayden of Boston and Braintree.<sup>2</sup> Her verses were such as to raise

<sup>1</sup> Sprague, I, 59-68; *Magnalia*, book 3, part ii, chap. 5; book 4, part ii, chap. 4, paragraph 8, and Johnson, part i, chaps. 34 and 43.

<sup>2</sup> Anna Haiden (or Hayden) was, it appears from what is said in the text above, sister to both Benjamin and Joseph Tompson. In her

doubts even in the uncritical mind of her brother, for in copying them he says that he has noted them

letter, copied in the journal, she refers to her "cousin" Simon Crosby, and to "one of my kinsman's Samuel Tompson's daughters."

Joseph Tompson had one blood sister named Anna (or Hannah) and, so far as I can discover, but one sister-in-law of that name. The latter was Hannah Denison, sister of his second wife. She was born in Roxbury in 1655. (See *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, xv, 113-118, and Savage, ii, 36.) She cannot have been the "sister Anna" of the journal, as she was not a sister of Benjamin Tompson, nor, apparently, cousin to any Simon Crosby, though by marriage Samuel Tompson, brother of Joseph, might have been her kinsman. On the other hand, Anna Tompson, daughter of William Tompson by his second wife, born in 1648, meets the requirements of the case admirably. Joseph and Benjamin were her half-brothers. She had also a half-brother Simon Crosby, and his son, also named Simon, was her nephew — or, in seventeenth-century parlance, her "cousin." Samuel Tompson, who died in 1695, was her half-brother. His son Samuel, and his grandson of the same name, were both "kinsmen" of hers. There seems no doubt that she was the Anna Haiden who lamented in rhyme the death of Benjamin Tompson.

In 1677 she was unmarried. By 1678, probably she had become the wife of Ebenezer Hayden of Boston. Clearly, before she wrote her poem on her brother Benjamin, she had married someone named Hayden. Now of the Haydens listed by Savage there appears to be only one who could have been her husband — Ebenezer of Boston, who was buried in Braintree after his death in February, 1718. This fits in with his widow's having been a resident of Braintree. Moreover, his wife is known to have been named Ann. He was admitted to the Old South Church in Boston in 1689, and under the same year is a record of the admission of Hannah Hayden, presumably his wife. Their first child was born in 1679. See *Historical Catalogue of the Old South Church*, pp. 160, 289.

Mrs. Hayden's letter copied in Joseph Tompson's journal was written in 1720. In it she speaks of a long illness, and of those who visited and aided her, but nowhere refers to her husband. This supports the conclusion that he was Ebenezer Hayden, who was not alive in 1720. See also *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, iii, 350; xi, 300.



“not for the poetry but for the loue & . . . Christian spirit breathing in them.” It is easy to be as sceptical as he about their poetic quality; but they are still worth preserving for the direct personal evidence on Benjamin Tompson which they supply. His family must have been proud of his talent; certainly they found him a generous friend in times of stress.

If Anna Hayden is the weakest of the writers of the *Handkerchiefs from Paul*, the brother whom she lamented has most merit. But, in Joseph Tompson’s mind, there were in the list names greater even than his brother Benjamin’s. John Wilson, Samuel Danforth, and Samuel Torrey, were heroes, ever to be remembered as “holy men of God.” The ministers were for him leaders, and just as, in his youth, he had chosen Billerica as a dwelling place because it offered a “settled ministry,” so in his age he loved to be “remembring afresh” the divines who had taught his generation and his father’s.

Samuel Torrey is not important in the story of American poetry, but he was undeniably eminent in his little world. He was elected President of Harvard, but did not accept the post. He achieved the distinction of preaching no less than three Election Sermons before the General Court of Massachusetts. To be invited to deliver one of these annual sermons was to be honored; to be asked to present three was to be singled out for unusual distinction.



Torrey was of English birth, coming to this country in 1640, when he was eight. He entered Harvard, but preferred to leave college without a degree rather than submit to what he held to be an unjust regulation by which the course of study was lengthened by a year. About 1656 he began to preach at Hull, where, a year later, he married Mary Rawson of Boston. In 1666, he became minister at Weymouth. There, in the next town to Braintree, he must have seen something of William Tompson, whom he was later to eulogize. Indeed, the two men were friends as early as 1662, for, in that year or before, he "sojourned" at the Tompsons' house. He was, we are told, "a great louer" of the Braintree preacher, even though he probably knew him well only in the last clouded years of his life.

There is no question that Torrey was an able and learned writer of prose, but he has left no trace of any great interest in verse. Tompson's death, however, was an event which he could neither pass by in silence nor fitly memorialize in prose, and he wrote the poem which appears in the Tompson journal.

He lived in Weymouth until 1707, when he died.<sup>1</sup> With those of the Tompson family who remained in Braintree, he probably kept up his friendship, but Joseph Tompson, in 1723, reverently copying Torrey's elegy on his father, was in Billerica, far from

<sup>1</sup> J. L. Sibley, *Biographical Sketches of Graduates of Harvard University*, i, 564-567.

Weymouth, and the Torrey whom he remembered was the young minister he had seen at his father's house "about sixty years past."

Samuel Danforth, the author of the eighth and ninth poems in the journal and of the almanac poems reprinted in this book, was, like Torrey, born in England. He came to America with his father in 1634. The latter died in 1638, and his twelve-year-old son was confided to the care of Thomas Shepard, minister in Cambridge. He graduated from Harvard in 1643, and was appointed a tutor there. In 1650 he was chosen as colleague of John Eliot in the church at Roxbury. Twenty-four years later his death moved Eliot to say, "*My Brother Danforth made the most glorious End, that ever I saw.*"

His wife was Mary Wilson, daughter of John Wilson, and it may be that he acquired some of his zest for rhyming from his father-in-law, who was a more renowned, if a less skilful, verse-maker. In producing the earliest almanacs of Massachusetts, Danforth was able to make use of his mathematical skill, turned to the service of astronomy, and also of his proficiency in rhyme. The four almanacs of his which are still extant contain two long poems and thirteen short verses, most of them riddles, of one stanza each. These are now reprinted, together with his two anagrams on William Tompson. Both of the latter have been recently published, but the first of them has not hitherto been definitely ascribed to

Danforth. The journal makes it clear that it was his, and not, as has been suggested, Benjamin Tompson's.<sup>1</sup> Probably Danforth wrote other verse, but none of it seems to be accessible to-day. What we have is sufficient to have marked him in his time as a practising poet — a divine who was also upon occasion a servant of the Muse.<sup>2</sup>

The only other poet who appears in the Tompson journal is John Wilson. The extent and nature of his fame, as late as 1695, appears in the words of Cotton Mather, who begins his *Memoria Wilsoniana* with an apology for not writing it in verse, for, he says: "I am going to write the *Life* of that *New-English* Divine, who had so nimble a Faculty of putting his Devout Thoughts into *Verse*, that he Signalized himself by the Greatest *Frequency*, perhaps, that ever Man used, of sending *Poems* to all Persons, in all Places, on all Occasions; and upon this, as well as upon Greater Accounts, was a *David* unto the *Flocks* of our Lord in the *Wilderness*: *Quicquid tentabat Dicere, Versus erat.*" But a hasty qualification follows: "This is the *Least Thing* that we have to Relate of that *Great Saint*; and accordingly, it is under a more considerable Character, that I must now exhibit him, even as a *Father* to the Infant

<sup>1</sup> See note on pages 118-119 *post*.

<sup>2</sup> For Danforth, see Sibley, i, 88-91; *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, xxxiv, 84, 85, and John Farmer, "Memoirs of Ministers," in *American Quarterly Register* (1836), viii, 135-137. In the last-named article is reprinted one of Danforth's poems.

Colonies of *New-England*.”<sup>1</sup> As the years went by, the founders of the Massachusetts churches came to be seen by their pious successors as peculiarly holy men. Others might carry on the work they had begun, but theirs was the credit for laying the corner-stones. So Wilson, though he did not let his light shine before men in books as John Cotton did, was famous, and because he labored in Boston, which speedily came to be the centre of the Massachusetts church, his reputation eclipsed that of many another early preacher, who, like William Tompson, did his task in a less populous and less influential town. Inevitably, in a Puritan community, Wilson’s fame as a minister helped to shed lustre on his poems, however lacking in intrinsic merit they may have been. Thus it is, that, though he published very little verse during his years in New England, Cotton Mather could think of him as a poet. A man of lesser note might have written and circulated many stanzas without winning renown, but the least scrap from the pen of a “father” like Wilson, was considered by the pious to be worthy of respect. To-day we think of both Benjamin Tompson and Samuel Danforth as having a better claim than Wilson to the title of poet, and Danforth, Torrey and the elder Tompson may seem to have been as able and successful ministers as he. But, when Cotton Mather wrote and

<sup>1</sup> C. Mather, *Memoria Wilsoniana*. This book is reprinted in the *Magnalia*, book 3, part i.

Joseph Tompson kept his journal, Wilson was a "great saint," a "David," whose verse demanded of the pious admiration not usually to be granted to the lines of a mere schoolmaster and physician or to the rhymed effusions of a less celebrated toiler in the Lord's vineyard.

Wilson was one Puritan preacher who was not only revered but loved. Cotton Mather's life of him is one of the best of the biographies in the *Magnalia*, and the story is told picturesquely, with special emphasis on the divine's charms as host and friend. "His *House* was Renowned for *Hospitality*," and there is a pleasant tale of his watching "a great Muster of Souldiers," while a friend remarked, "Sir, *I'll tell you a great Thing; here's a mighty Body of People, and there is not Seven of them all; but what loves Mr. Wilson*," and the preacher replied, "Sir, *I'll tell you as good a Thing as that, here's a mighty Body of People, and there is not so much as one of them all, but Mr. Wilson loves him*." Nathaniel Ward, the "simple cobbler of Agawam," was famous for his mordant pen, but he knew open-heartedness when he saw it, and said, alluding to Wilson's love for anagrams, "The anagram of John Wilson is, 'I pray, come in, you are heartily welcome.'"<sup>1</sup>

Wilson was born in England about 1588.<sup>2</sup> His

<sup>1</sup> C. Mather, *Memoria Wilsoniana*.

<sup>2</sup> In general I have followed Cotton Mather for my data on Wilson, verifying his statements by other evidence, whenever possible. Other

father, William Wilson, was a graduate of Oxford, an Anglican divine, and eventually chaplain to Archbishop Grindal, who was his wife's uncle. He became Canon of Windsor in 1583, and continued there until he died in 1615.<sup>1</sup> His son John studied at Eton, and first appears distinctly, when, in 1601, the Duc de Biron, ambassador from Henry IV of France, visited the school. On that occasion, John Wilson, who "though the smallest boy in the school, had been made a Præpostor," addressed the visitor in a Latin speech, winning thereby a present of three angels.<sup>2</sup> He was elected a Scholar of King's College, Cambridge, in 1604, but the record of his matriculation there is dated 1606. He took the degree of A.B. in 1610.<sup>3</sup> At college he came into contact with Puri-

authorities are indicated in the footnotes. The first edition of Mather's life of Wilson, the *Memoria Wilsoniana*, published in 1695, contains a dedication to Edward Bromfield, whose wife was Wilson's granddaughter. Bromfield, it appears, paid for the printing of the book, so that it is obvious that Mather's facts must have been accurate enough to content Wilson's descendants. It seems highly probable that from them he obtained family papers and information he could not otherwise have secured.

<sup>1</sup> E. Ashmole, *Antiquities of Berkshire* (1719), iii, 157; *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, lxi, 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39; H. C. M. Lyte, *History of Eton College* (1911), p. 186, and references there given.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Mather's account is in error as to the dates of Wilson's career at Cambridge, and various other writers differ as to them. I am indebted to Mr. J. G. Bartlett for precise information. He writes, in a letter to me, dated June 19, 1926, "Rev. John Wilson . . . matriculated at King's College, Cambridge, at Easter 1606, and proceeded to the degree of A.B. in 1609-10 and A.M. 1613; he also was a fellow of that college for a while. He had no connection with the other colleges at



tan ideas, and his sympathy with them brought him into official disfavor. His residence at the university was interrupted by this, and for a time, probably just after he took his first degree, he gave up his design of studying for the ministry, and turned to the Inns of Court. There he heard Dr. Gouge, his predecessor at Eton and King's, and a divine whose piety and learning brought him many disciples. In 1612 Wilson met the famous Scultetus. He and Gouge were men well adapted to confirm him in his Puritanic leanings. By 1613, however, as a result of the influence of his father and his friends, his waverings from Anglican orthodoxy were sufficiently forgiven to allow him to return to Cambridge, where, in that year, he took his Master's degree.<sup>1</sup>

Cambridge; the John Wilson of Christ College and the John Wilson of Trinity College were different persons of the same name. There is no record of his entering King's prior to his matriculation . . . Dr. Venn . . . informed me that if a boy entered a college before he was 14 years old, he could not take the matriculate oath until 14; so in such cases sometimes the matriculation was postponed and sometimes apparently omitted."

<sup>1</sup> Mather says, "His [Wilson's] Father, then diverting him from the Designs of the *Ministry*, disposed him to the *Inns of Court*; where he fell into Acquaintance with some young Gentlemen, who associated with him in constant Exercises of Devotion; to which Meetings the repeated Sermons of Dr. *Gouge* were a continual Entertainment: And here it was, that he came into the Advantageous Knowledge of the Learned *Scultetus*, Chaplain to the Prince Palatine of the *Rhine*, then making some stay in *England*. When he had continued Three Years at the *Inns of Court*, his Father . . . permitted his proceeding *Master of Arts*, in the University of *Cambridge*."

Gouge began to preach in London in June, 1608. Scultetus came to England with the Prince Elector late in 1612. Mather says that Dr.



For a time he remained at Emmanuel College. His first sermon was preached at Newport. He married, before May, 1615, Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir John Mansfield. His father died in 1615, leaving him "the lease of the Rectory and Parsonage of Caxton in the County of Cambridge" <sup>1</sup> but the records tell nothing further as to this, and the next glimpse of him is as a preacher in various parishes, in one of which, Mortlake,<sup>2</sup> in Surrey, his "*Non-Conformity* exposed him to the Rage of Persecution." From this he was saved by good fortune and the fact that "a Kinsman of his Wife" was able to moderate the

Cary was Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge when Wilson first tried to return thither, and Cary's year in office was 1612. Moreover, Mather says that when Wilson actually did come back to Cambridge, the Earl of Northampton was Chancellor. The Earl took office in 1612 and died in 1614. Clearly Wilson's three years absence from the university cannot have been prior to 1609, nor later than 1613, when he took his M.A. Since he received his A.B. early in 1610, it seems almost sure that he went then to the Inns of Court, returning late in 1612, or in 1613, and obtaining then his second degree. At the time, residence was not required for the M.A. degree. All the data given by Mather fit in with this chronology, and no other hypothesis satisfies the requirements of his narrative. It is hardly likely that he could have been wrong in all that he says of this episode in Wilson's life, and there is no reason to doubt that it falls in the period from 1610 to 1613. It is worth noting, too, that Mather says an Episcopal visitation of the university was the cause of Wilson's leaving, since we know that there was such a visitation in 1610. See *Dictionary of National Biography*, "William Gouge (1578-1653)"; D. A. Hauck, *Realencyklopädie*, "Scultetus"; *The Historical Register of the University of Cambridge* (1917); A. A. Leigh, *King's College*, p. 81, and D. Masson, *Life of Milton*, i (1859), 120.

<sup>1</sup> *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* xxxviii, 306.

<sup>2</sup> Mather has "Moreclake."

storm. As a chaplain in "Honourable and Religious Families" he found security for a time, and must have enjoyed especially his term of service in the household of "the most Pious Lady *Scudamore*." Cotton Mather does not identify her except by this phrase and by a mention of "Mr. *Leigh*" as her husband. Actually she was Ruth Leigh, daughter of Griffith Hampden, a member of an old and honorable county family, a good Sheriff of Buckinghamshire, and Knight of the Shire under Queen Elizabeth. She was born in 1575, and her second husband was Sir Philip Scudamore. Thus by marriage she was connected with a family known through two of its members to Spenser and Milton. In 1611, or shortly thereafter, she married Henry Leigh of Rushall, Bucks, and it was as his wife that Wilson knew her.<sup>1</sup> Probably he came into her "fair seat of a house . . . all embattled castle-wise" about 1615, when she was forty. Her nephew, John Hampden, one day to be the most famous of his name, and another nephew, Edmund Waller, later to write lyrics to Sacharissa, were probably at Oxford or at Eton during Wilson's residence at Rushall, and he may never have seen them, but it is almost certain that he did see, and perhaps taught Edward Leigh. He was

<sup>1</sup> T. Harwood (ed.), *Survey of Staffordshire*, pp. 405-406; F. W. Willmore, *Records of Rushall*, p. 46; C. J. Robinson, *Mansions and Manors of Herefordshire*, pp. 139, 140, 155; G. Lipscomb, *History and Antiquities of Buckingham*, II, 234, 291, 292; J. C. Anderson, *Chronicle of Croydon*, pp. 57, 66.

Ruth Leigh's stepson, thirteen years old in 1615. In after years he was renowned both for his success as a soldier fighting for the Parliament, and for his labors as scholar and writer.<sup>1</sup> The Scudamores, the Hampdens, and their connections, the Cromwells, were great families whose houses must have offered to a young divine much that was congenial and inspiring. Lady Ruth, Wilson's employer, seems to have been famous not only for her piety but also for her attainments,<sup>2</sup> and she appears to have been, like some of her more celebrated kinsmen, and like Wilson himself, a Puritan at heart. It was she who intervened when his denunciation of the quality of the talk at the Leigh's table one Sabbath not unnaturally enraged the host. Wilson's resulting threat to leave the house, as reported by Lady Ruth to her husband, led him to forget his wrath and to mend "his Countenance and Carriage" so that from thenceforth "unsuitable Discourse, on the Lord's Day, was cured among them."

Whether Mr. Leigh's objections to Wilson's obtrusive piety persisted, or whether the young preacher resolved that he could serve better elsewhere is a matter for guessing, but he eventually left the Leighs' and preached for a time at Henley, and then, from 1616 to 1618, "by turns" at Bumsted, Stoke, Clare, and Cavendish, on the border of

<sup>1</sup> Lipscomb, ii, 236, iii, 182; Willmore, pp. 47 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, p. 57.

Surrey and Essex. In 1618 he was regularly settled as a minister in Sudbury.<sup>1</sup>

However much else Wilson may have done in the five years after he left Cambridge, it is certain that he did not serve as chaplain to the Countess of Leicester, and did not write a little book called *Some Helps to Faith*. He is often said to have done both, but these exploits were those of a quite different John Wilson, of Guildford, who died in 1630.<sup>2</sup> Our John Wilson until his settlement at Sudbury seems neither to have published a line nor to have left anything but the scantiest record of his adventures. Indeed, even after he began to preach at Sudbury, there is not much to tell of him, save for a few anecdotes, set down by Mather, and a tale of increasing discord with the authorities, who frowned on Puritans. In 1626 he published his *Song of Deliverance*; in 1627 he preached at least one sermon in Windsor, his birth-place, and in 1628 two others in London.<sup>3</sup>

By 1630 he had proved sufficiently that his Puri-

<sup>1</sup> T. W. Davids, *Annals of Evangelical Nonconformity in Essex*, p. 167. Mather has "Candish" for Cavendish.

<sup>2</sup> For an instance of the confusion, see, for example, A. W. M'Clure, *Life of Wilson*, pp. 18-21. John Wilson of Guildford died there in 1630, and the title-page of *Some Helps to Faith* describes him and not our John Wilson. So also, the dedication of the book, which is to the Countess of Leicester, shows that John Wilson of Guildford, was once chaplain to her, and has no reference to John Wilson of Boston. See O. Manning and W. Bray, *History and Antiquities of Surrey* (1804-14), i, 69. Dr. Williamson, of Guildford, has also sent me information as to John Wilson of that place.

<sup>3</sup> *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, 1, 205, 206-207.

tanism could not thrive unmolested under the supervision of Laud, and he turned to the colonies. His wife was well content in England and wholly disinclined to leave it for the bleak shores of Massachusetts. Her husband, therefore, sailed without her and without his three children. In the spring of 1630 he landed in Boston. On July 30, the First Church was founded there, and he became in due course its Teacher.<sup>1</sup>

In the following April he went back to England, and during his stay by dint of much persuasion, fasting, and prayer, at last prevailed upon his wife to give up Old England for New. With her daughter Elizabeth and her son John, she took passage with him in the "Whale" and arrived in Boston in May, 1632. The eldest son, Edmund, probably never came to New England, but stayed in his native land, later studied in Europe, became a physician of some note, and died in 1657, ten years before his father.<sup>2</sup>

Except for one more trip to England, undertaken in 1634 and 1635 to settle his brother Edmund's estate, Wilson lived out the rest of his life in Boston, winning laurels as a founder of New England Congregationalism. His activities centred in the First Church of Boston, of which he was at first Teacher and then Pastor, but he lent variety and a spice of

<sup>1</sup> G. E. Ellis, *History of the First Church in Boston*, pp. 3, 7; *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, lxi, 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, lxi, 41; 4 *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, i, 94.

danger to his career by working as a chaplain in the colonial militia and as a missionary to the Indians.<sup>1</sup> His second daughter, born in 1633, eighteen years later married Samuel Danforth. Her older sister Elizabeth married the Reverend Ezekiel Rogers. John Wilson the younger graduated from Harvard in 1642, and in 1651 became the first minister of Medfield. The Wilsons by their own right and by marital alliances were thus of the aristocracy of the colony. It is to be hoped that Mrs. Wilson learned to find in this some compensation, however meagre, for the advantages, social and otherwise, which she sacrificed in order to follow her husband "over an *Ocean* into a *Wilderness*." She was not permitted ever again to see the shops of London or the green fields of Surrey, for after some sixteen years as the patient helpmate in Boston, it was in the "wilderness" that she died at last.<sup>2</sup>

In 1667, her husband, too, was buried in Boston. There is abundant testimony that he was mourned and affectionately remembered by the people among whom he had chosen, in the pursuit of his ideal, to spend the best years of his life.

As has been said, he published little verse, and the list of his printed work in prose, is even shorter. His Latin poem on John Harvard does not seem to have

<sup>1</sup> He became Pastor, November 22, 1632. See Ellis, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, lxi, 41, 127. The date of Mrs. Wilson's death is given here as 1658; Ellis (p. 6) says June 6, 1660.



been published until Cotton Mather included it in his *Magnalia*, and his verses on his grandchild's death are known only by a fragment printed in the same volume. In 1663, Shepard's *Church-Membership of Children* included Wilson's sheaf of anagrams upon its author, and a volume of sermons by John Norton, issued in the next year, contained more of his work of precisely the same sort. He wrote a preface for a book by Samuel Whiting, collaborated in preparing two other introductory epistles for volumes by Richard Mather and John Higginson, and after his death one of his sermons found its way into print.<sup>1</sup> The verses on Brisco appeared as a broadside in 1657 or later. He may have published other works in New England, but it seems unlikely that anything save an occasional preface or two is omitted from this brief list — unless, indeed, he was, as he is by some scholars suspected to have been, the author of *The Day Breaking . . . of the Gospell with the Indians in New England*.<sup>2</sup>

Wilson had, however, won his spurs as a writer before he left England, by publishing there in 1626 his *Song of Deliverance*, which was reprinted in Boston thirteen years after his death. It was as a

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Whiting, *A Discourse of the Last Judgment*, Cambridge, 1664; Richard Mather, *The Summe of Certain Sermons*, Cambridge, 1652; John Higginson, *The Cause of God*, Cambridge, 1663; John Wilson, *A Seasonable Watch-word unto Christians*, Cambridge, 1677.

<sup>2</sup> See S. A. Green, in *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, xxvi, 392-395.



versemaker that he began his career, and as a verse-maker that he distinguished himself in New England. However few of his poems were printed, his son assures us that his collected poetical works would fill a large folio. Of all this writing, a great deal, circulated in manuscript, must have been known in Wilson's Boston, and it must have served to build up his reputation as a prolific poet. Other divines published far more than he, but his poems in manuscript and his sermons sufficed to convince his compeers of his skill and learning. To-day his verses are more interesting than his prose — not because of their intrinsic merit, but because they seem to have been admired in their day, and so may serve as an index to the literary taste of his time, whereas the one sermon of his now extant is no more and no less striking than many another product of the early New England pulpit.

#### IV

#### *The Poems*

Cotton Mather was something of a critic. He says of Wilson's verse, "If the *Curious* Relished the *Piety* sometimes rather than the *Poetry*, the Capacity of the *Most* therein to be accommodated, must be considered." This is guarded praise. He speaks of Wilson's "nimbleness" in versification, and of his literary fertility, but the passage quoted makes it plain

that he did not regard the value of their products as primarily aesthetic. He suggests that the verse was less poetry in a narrow sense than an effective means of edification and consolation, and he reminds his readers that what was chiefly considered by its writer was its usefulness for its audience — an audience not “curious” in artistic matters, nor learned in the technicalities of letters.

To them the anagram seemed, no doubt, a more worthy device than it does to modern critics. Wilson’s proficiency in the construction of anagrams was famous among his contemporaries. Mather wrote of:

His Care to guide his *Flock*, and feed his *Lambs*,  
By, *Words, Works, Prayers, Psalms, Alms*, and  
*Anagrams*:

Those *Anagrams*, in which he made to <sup>1</sup> Start  
Out of meer *Nothings*, by *Creating Art*,  
Whole *Words* of Counsel; did to *Motes* unfold  
*Names*, till they Lessons gave richer than Gold.

Once again it is rather serviceability than literary merit which is emphasized. It would be interesting to try to determine why New England Puritans, little in touch with literary fashions, so often made use of the anagram, and apparently saw in it something of peculiar virtue for their purposes. To quote Mather once more: “There is a certain little *Sport of*

<sup>1</sup> The original edition of the *Magnalia* has “no Start,” but “to Start” is the reading demanded by the sense.

*Wit*, in *Anagrammatizing the Names of Men*; which was used as long ago at least as the Days of Old *Lycophron*: And which sometimes has afforded Reflections very *Monitory*. . . . Yea, 'tis possible that they who affect such *Grammatical Curiosities*, will be willing to plead a *Prescription* of much higher and Elder Antiquity for them; even the *Temurah*, or *Mutation*, with which the *Jews* do Criticise upon the Oracles of the *Old Testament*. There, they say, you'll find the *Anagram* of our *First Fathers Name Ha adam*, to express *Adamah*, the Name of the . . . *Earth*, whence he had his Original. An *Anagram* of a *Good* Signification, they'll show you [Gen. 6. 8.] and of a *Bad* one [Gen. 38. 7.] in those Glorious Oracles; and they will endeavour to perswade you, that *Maleachi* in *Exodus* is Anagrammatically expounded *Michael*, in *Daniel*." In England Herbert, Fletcher, and others, wrote anagrams, and throughout the literature of the first half of the seventeenth century they are recognized as a special type of witty exercise, in spite of the disapprobation of such a critic as Ben Jonson.<sup>1</sup> It may have been contact with English literature of his time, or simply familiarity with Camden's discussion of the anagram — upon which Cotton Mather seems to have relied for

<sup>1</sup> Cf., in general, H. B. Wheatley, *Of Anagrams*, pp. 101 ff. Jonson, according to Drummond, "scorned Anagrams," but he made use of them more than once. See C. H. Herford and P. Simpson, *Ben Jonson, The Man and His Work*, i, 144, 170.

most of his remarks upon the subject <sup>1</sup> — which led Wilson so often to try his hand at this sort of writing, or there may be back of his taste for them, and that displayed by others of his Puritan contemporaries, some feeling that their use by Hebrew commentators gave to them a kind of merit not granted to mere tricks of literary craftsmanship.<sup>2</sup> Whatever the reason, anagrams are common in colonial literature, and Wilson, in using them so often, may have been guided by nothing more than a knowledge that here at least was one form of wit which was sure to be both familiar and readily intelligible to his readers.

His most elaborate work was the *Song of Deliverance*, printed in 1626. Before criticizing it, one should remember the lines in its introduction:

'T is not my hope (yet would I not presage)  
That *men* will take my plainness in good part.  
But come, ye children, ye of tender Age,  
This unto you I write, and thus in Verse,  
That ye might best conceive, learn and rehearse.

This is disarming. Wilson wrote for children, and wrote to teach them, using verse rather because it was easy to memorize than because it was the form artistically necessary for what he had to say. So, in all simplicity, he turns into rhyme the story of the

<sup>1</sup> See Camden's *Remaines Concerning Britain* (1636), pp. 168ff., and also George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesie*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (N. Y., 1910), article "Anagram."

Armada, of the plague of 1603, of the Gunpowder Plot, and of a catastrophe which befell a Papist congregation in 1623. He pretends to no originality, saying:

Diverse worthy ones with faithful pen,  
Have writ the most that I am writing here.

It is not suprising, therefore, to find that his verse follows almost verbatim passages in Speed, in Camden, contemporary tracts on the Gunpowder Plot, and one or more of the pamphlets on the tragedy — or, as he would have said, God's just vengeance — of 1623. Some of the parallels between his verse and his prose sources are indicated in the notes accompanying the text as it is printed in this book, but source-hunting is not profitable in this instance, except in so far as it shows how little he chose to add to what others had already said and how much more concerned he was with facts than with style.

The poems which follow the *Song of Deliverance* in the little volume in which it appeared, are more literary in tone. Two of them seem creditable enough college Latin, of a sort which abounds in the period and is to be found among the *juvenilia* of many of its poets. *To God Our Twice-Revenger* is more elaborate both in structure and phrasing than the *Song of Deliverance* and, awkward as it is, gives a hint that its writer would have liked to be, if he could, a poet. To speak of the "mazed smile" of the

sea, is for him a daring imaginative flight. The last couplet of the first verse has a metrical felicity usually sadly wanting in his work. And that he was not wholly out of touch with the poetical fashions of his day is shown in the compression of the last six lines of the poem — or in that of the conclusion of his translation of Beza's verses — savoring of the method of certain other poets of the era, who love to crowd more sense into a few words than they will bear. Wilson falls into the obvious pitfalls of the practise, and is obscure rather than strikingly witty, but at least he sought for what he and many others believed to be a kind of artistic excellence. So also in his *A Pillar Consecrated*, he tries an epigram, of the same sort as those indulged in by many a Jacobean wit. His translation of Beza's lines on the Armada is uninspired enough, though certainly no more so than the rival version of the same original, which was thought worthy of inclusion in Speed's history. Finally, *Another Song* seems to have a quality not found in the other poems. Its form gives it a peculiar chant-like effect, which almost triumphs over the metrical weakness and the lack of poetry in the phrasing. The poem suggests that the man who wrote it, given opportunities for further development of his powers, and greater familiarity with the demands of English verse, might have risen at least to the level of a poet who could command technique, even though still ungifted with the vision and trans-



forming imagination necessary for the highest success in his art.

Whatever promise Wilson showed in his little book in 1626, seems hardly to be borne out by what we know of his productions in New England. His verses on Norton, Shepard, and Brisco were published in his lifetime, so that presumably he was not ashamed of them. But, although they may arouse wonder at the ingenuity which could extract no less than six anagrams from one name and write presentable lines on each, there is little in their monotonous couplets, or the trotting ballad measure, to be praised for either form or content. Pious they undoubtedly are; solemnly didactic or consolatory, filled with the familiar truths of religion, and, at times, learned in their references, but for the rest they lack any spark of imaginative fervor to kindle them to poetry. They are simple, eminently sincere, and intelligible to anyone who reads. Wilson, no doubt, had no higher ideal for them. Joseph Thompson relished Wilson's anagrams on his father, and recorded no qualms as to their literary defects; no doubt most of those for whom such verses were written were as uncritical as he.

Danforth's two anagrams on Thompson are no more striking than those of his father-in-law, John Wilson, though they reveal, perhaps, a somewhat surer metrical touch. But his almanac poems are more interesting to-day than most colonial verse.

The twelve stanzas, one for each month, from the 1647 almanac, are ingenious enough, though by no means impeccable in execution. They make whatever appeal can be made by riddles, and, far more important, they deal with the every-day concerns of life in Puritan Massachusetts, so that they preserve a flavor of reality not now discernible for most readers in the elegies and anagrams. Brooks, elections, ships filled with European commodities, fisheries, wood-cutting, ice, and Indians and English together "by the ears" gathering the harvest of corn — these are homely things, and not as amenable, perhaps, to the uses of poetry as Herrick's "Maypoles, Hockcarts, Wassails, Wakes," or his visions of "The Court of Mab and of the Fairy King." But, after all, many of Danforth's subjects are still parts of American life, and capable of being made picturesque. If he falls short of picturesqueness, he does at least give the flavor of the soil, and a sense of our nearness to those men who, for all their Puritanism and their remoteness in time, knew some aspects of American life and loved them and hated them, much as we do still. The same effect of reality is to be found in the two other almanac poems. Allegory is a literary convention almost outmoded to-day, but it was in high esteem in 1648 and 1649, and in putting what he had to say of the sources and growth of Massachusetts and its church into allegorical narratives, Danforth was in tune with current English modes. It is refreshing,

too, to find him light-hearted as he writes. His splitting of the word "Tobacco" in the next to the last line of one of his poems must have been intended as a jest; his love for riddles shows him to have been no mere dry-as-dust. It is worth noting that, even in the heart of Puritan New England, he is not afraid of "Nymphs," of "Phoebus," of classical allusions and images not often to be discovered in the pages of his more sober neighbors. His point of view is often definitely "literary," and it seems almost certain that the "Philomathemat.," who wrote the almanacs was neither averse to pagan literature nor deaf to echoes from current English books. Later, as a grave divine, he may have foregone all this, but his youth fortunately gave him time and opportunity to write poems which are among the first in New England to carry anything like a native tang. If Anne Bradstreet's landscape is often that of Old England rather than New, Danforth's pigeons are Massachusetts pigeons, and his Indians are no abstractions, conjured up by stay-at-home wits of London, but a living "rampant crew," whose ways were dark and "whose arrows stung." And Danforth holds his own with his poetically inclined contemporaries in New England, so far as fluency and dextrous versifying are concerned. There is more than a hint of a sure poetic ear in his loving use of the Indian names, as in his

grave Momanattock rose,  
Grim Sasacus with swarms of Pequottoes.

And there is both strength and vividness in the last stanza of the 1649 poem beginning

While Europe burnes & broiles & dyes in flames.

Benjamin Tompson's verses need little comment. Professor Hall and others have said what should be said, and his greater aptitude for satire than for other forms, has been pointed out. Whether he owed his skill to Dryden or to Quarles, the couplet is, in his hands, more "modern" and more deftly wrought than in Danforth's. The new poems, now first printed, add nothing to the usual estimate of his talents, but it is not out of place in reprinting his epitaph on his father to call attention to the fact that its epigrammatic quality and its vigorous antithesis are worthy of many a more famous wit.

Torrey's poem on Tompson is undistinguished, and Anna Hayden's contributions are likely to be regarded still, as they were by her brother, not for their poetic value but for their human quality.

When all is said and done, the bulk of the world's great poetry is no whit increased by bringing these forgotten works of Wilson, Tompson, and the rest, to light. They deserve printing not for any appeal which they can make to sophisticated students of *belles lettres*, but for their historical implications, for the sidelights they shed upon Puritan character and taste. They all have such merits as piety and sincerity can confer; on the side of art they leave much

to be desired. The breath of that rare spirit which indefinitely marks poetry for most of us is all too sadly lacking. John Wilson wrote of the Gunpowder Plot, but lovers of poetry are not likely to desert Phineas Fletcher's treatment of the same theme in *The Apollyonists*, to mention but one of many similar English poems, for his. Poor Abigail Tompson, stuck in a Braintree snowdrift, hardly escapes being ridiculous as he portrays her, and the strength and splendor of *Lycidas*, the terse vigor of Cleveland's *Epitaph on the Earl of Strafford*, with its pregnant "Here lies blood," or the melody of Donne's echoing "Shee, shee is gone; she is gone," are unknown in Wilson's lines. Some standard not purely artistic must be applied, some rule other than Guiderius's

Notes of sorrow out of tune are worse  
Than priests and fanes that lie,

if these gleanings from colonial verse are to be read aright. Of course, funeral poetry is notoriously difficult, and of the eulogies of some of the poets contemporary with Wilson, one modern critic has said, "One may doubt whether the thing ought to be done at all." One may, and one may suspect that when it is well done, it is because not only good craftsmanship but deep feeling and sincerity are written into every verse. If this be true, the Puritan verse-makers won half the battle, for they ring true, for all their crudeness, where certain greater poets upon occasion

fail. Dryden, writing on Lord Hastings, is ingenious, polished, but unbearably artificial; Donne's lines on Elizabeth Drury contain many passages in which, in spite of all the elaborate ornamentation, one is conscious that the intricately carved shell contains no kernel. The stark crudeness of the colonial verse-writers has, after all, an effect, if not a completely developed one; if their verses are to be denied the name of poetry, they are human documents as many more cunningly executed works are not. In Jacobean and Caroline England, "wit" was often purchased at the cost of excessive straining for effect, as in Cleveland's

When we have filled the rundlets of our eyes  
We'll issue 't forth and vent such elegies  
As that our tears shall seem the Irish Seas,  
We floating islands, living Hebrides.

In Puritan New England, on the other hand, one must pay in harshness and lack of music for a glimpse of the deep emotion which demanded expression of writers unequal to their task.

There still remains one point of view from which the verse collected in this volume has a value of its own. It represents a considerable body of colonial rhyming, which has either been unknown or neglected hitherto. Judgments — and there have been many of them — passed on early American poetry in general, and on that of New England in particular, have been based principally upon other products



of the period. If these judgments are correct, the verses now printed should sustain them; if incorrect, modifications and qualifications can best be made with these documents in hand.

In general, it may be, the writings now gathered together confirm the standard opinions on the colonial verse of New England. At the same time, they make plain one or two points sometimes left out of diagnoses of the poetic ailments of the American Puritan. Certainly they help to dispel the illusion that he was "hostile" to art in all its forms. If so, surely he would not have tried so often to write verse, and rather than being consoled by Wilson's lines, his bereaved neighbors would have been repelled at having his pious reminders couched in verse, when less ambitious prose might suffice for all he had to say. Poetry is an art, and the Puritans knew this. If they objected to art as such, as they are sometimes said to have done, it is surprising that some of the busiest of them gave so much precious time to exercising their limited ability in one of its branches. Similarly it is impossible to say that the mere fact that a man was a Puritan prevented his being a good poet. What one misses in Danforth's verse is not anything of which religious scruples or a Calvinistic creed could have deprived him, and John Wilson while a professed Anglican seems to have written no better than he did when he became an ardent Puritan preacher in Boston.

Perhaps the way out is in believing that Milton, for example, succeeded as a poet, because he was born a poet, and would have remained one had he continued in the Anglicanism of his youth, in his later Presbyterianism, or had he omitted any one of the other stages through which the development of his religious convictions passed. Roger Williams was a Puritan, if one will have it so, but he was certainly a far more liberal and winning spirit than most of those Massachusetts Puritans with whom he so often disagreed. Yet his poetry is no better than theirs, nor, indeed, markedly different. Both Thomas Fuller and Jeremy Taylor wrote great prose — both were Anglicans — yet their poems have usually no more to recommend them than those of more than one of the colonists. Both Richard Baxter and John Bunyan were Puritans expert in prose, and one of them, certainly, has fairly won the title of artist, yet their verse was as uninspired as Wilson's, and often less worthy than Tompson's, or Anne Bradstreet's, or the best of Wigglesworth's. The poet is a poet still, however he looks at religion or church polity; the man whose talents are better fitted for prose, or not adapted to literary expression at all, will never, be he Anglican or Puritan, win favor from the Muse.

Nor can it well be maintained that the Puritan training and education afforded by Colonial Massachusetts account by themselves for the poetic steril-

ity of her sons. Wilson had as much and as good formal education as Milton, Phineas Fletcher, or many another literary light of his day, but he wrote less well than Milton or Fletcher, and less well than Danforth, or Tompson, who owed such education as they had to Harvard. One must look for the clue to the literary deficiencies of early New England elsewhere than in the fact that its inhabitants, being Puritans, deliberately shunned poetry, or in a belief that her one college and her schools were inherently incapable of training potential poets.

It is none the less true that England from 1620 to 1700 brought forth far more good poets than did Massachusetts — more, probably, than can be accounted for by the difference in population between the colony and the mother country. Some explanation there must be, and it is here that Joseph Tompson's journal, and the poems it contains, are most suggestive. A man only slightly touched by the divine madness that makes the bard, may be mute, or sing unworthily, if he is denied opportunities to practise his art, or if he sets other interests above it. The Puritan was not hostile to art, but he was relatively indifferent to it. Poetry, music, fine prose, painting, architecture — all these were well enough in their way, but, for him, higher than any other beauty was the beauty of holiness, the reward of a patient search for God's will and a diligent effort to perform it unflaggingly and with self-forgetful sacri-

fice. This attitude thrusts the arts into the realm of pastimes, and the Puritan's adventure with God was so thrilling, and, to him, so beautiful, that there were few hours left for pastime. Nor did he regret the pleasures he left untasted in order to pursue what seemed to him more enduring joys. Music was therefore usually omitted from his scheme of things, except as an adjunct to worship. Painting he thought little of, except in so far as a good portrait might serve better than a bad one to keep filial piety alive. But poetry, on occasion, he could couple with his main end in life, for a poem might teach, and convey the letter and spirit of God's word, more effectively than prose. The emphasis, however, was perforce on the end rather than the means. A Puritan preacher might be filled with artistic aspirations, but he was hardly likely to be a Puritan preacher at all unless he placed highest what he saw as his duty to man and God, and therefore he must usually sacrifice the poems he might have written in order to construct verses which could contribute immediately to the success of his dearest ambition. This was the more necessary in a community where an infant church and an infant state demanded of everyone persistent and arduous labors for its support. If most Puritans in England were indifferent to poetry, except in so far as it relieved the afflicted or corrected abuses, their brethren in the colonies were doubly so, for they faced a double task, with ob-

stacles unknown in the country they had left. Poor Joseph Tompson, filling his days with his activities as a good townsman, was at the same time fighting his way toward God, and he found life so strenuous that even an entry in his journal had to be apologized for, lest it seem a waste of minutes which might be better spent. Men so situated could not have written like a Lovelace or a Suckling, a Milton in retirement at Horton, or a Herbert snugly installed in a country parsonage in a land where life had progressed beyond the stage of a daily struggle for existence. That New England in Wilson's time was stony soil for poetry means essentially that it was a place where other forms of human expression necessarily came first, and where time for the writing or reading of verse was all too scant.

In still another respect, the would-be poet found Massachusetts a place of little opportunity. If he was skilled in the technicalities of wit, able to debate on points of learning or criticism with Jonson or Dryden, steeped in the classics and English poetry of the past, he might write, if he had the time, and bring to bear all his resources and skill, only to be rewarded by finding few who could criticize or even appreciate how finely he had wrought. Joseph Tompson saw that Anna Hayden's verses were less good than his brother's; but he would not have known what to say if asked to compare a page of Milton with one of Sylvester's *Du Bartas*. There

was no Mermaid, no Will's, in Boston; such taverns as there were heard more of Indian raids, of crops, of fisheries and trade, than of poetics or of wit. There was no royal court in Massachusetts. There were no gay and idle dilettantes to praise or condemn current poems, no patrons to aid struggling authors, no book-buying public except for such books as were tried and tested by time or likely to be helpful in the day's work. Instead, there were a fair number of New Englanders who could boast of a university training, but whose labors as divines, doctors, or teachers — or as bread-winners in frontier towns — left little leisure for the careful savoring of poetry. Far more numerous were those colonists, less well-educated and less familiar with books, to whom reading was either an unknown art or one practised so rarely as to be limited to explorations of those tomes supposed to be most fruitful in good counsel.

Emerson said that a man "may have a rare constructive power to make poems, or characters, or nations, perchance, but though his power be new and unique, if he be starved of his needful influences, if he have no love, no book, no critic, no external call, no need or market for that faculty of his, then he may sleep through dwarfish years and die at last without fruit." In respect to an audience, at least, the colonial would-be poet was "starved of his needful influences." He had always before him reminders that he could expect no criticism of value, and



that his readers would look primarily for what his verses had to say and not often at the manner of their saying it. Those readers were, he must know, deaf to the nuances of verse. They were men like Joseph Tompson, and relished a pious poem because it was pious, liked ballad metre because it was familiar, and offered to an author none of the stimulation of an audience ready to appreciate all that he could give. John Wilson wrote a poem for the children of Sudbury, in England, and later many more for the plain citizens of Massachusetts. If he was adroit in nothing else, he was skilful in adapting his lines to the standards of his readers. Cotton Mather scented the weakness of his work, when he recommended it to the "pious" and not to the "curious," but he also pointed out that Wilson's audience had a greater "capacity" for piety than for aesthetics. In London, and to some extent elsewhere in England, there were readers who furnished an incentive to write well; but the children of Sudbury parish offered no such incentive to John Wilson. It has been truly said that the early poets of Massachusetts, if they are to be judged fairly in and of their time, should be compared with those in England and Europe who wrote for similar readers and under similar handicaps. They cannot be likened to those who spoke for the ears of the wits of Whitehall, or sought a hearing in the broadly cultured wealthy households dotted about seventeenth-century Eng-

land. They must be set beside those English writers, most of them now forgotten save for a Bunyan and a Baxter, who wrote for simpler folk, were read by them, and in their day were more widely appreciated than their great contemporaries upon whom a limited number of discerning readers, in their own time and since, have conferred immortality. Thus compared, the New England verse-writers do not fare badly. Many an Englishman wrote worse things than they, and few with their opportunities accomplished more.

There is but cold consolation in all this for lovers of poetry for its own sake; they must still find the literary landscape of the colonies sadly bleak. But for those who can content themselves with the great poetry which is the common property of all English-speaking nations, there may still be a moment's interest, if no more, in the scattered efforts in rhyme of the days when America was young and her poetic wings untried. Much is said to-day of a "democratic literature," and to read the "democratic literature" of the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay in contrast to the "aristocratic" verses of the Cavalier poets, gives food for thought. The conflict of utilitarianism with the artistic point of view, of ethics with aesthetics, and the problem of how best to put into literature the distinctive zest of American life, are still discussed. Surely there may be hints of meaning, even for the twentieth century, in the

struggles, successes, and failures of the seventeenth-century pioneer; to the historically minded even the reading of inexpert verse may sometimes prove salutary. John Wilson, Benjamin Tompson, and their fellows, will never again be hailed as they once were, but one may still turn back to them and receive now and then a ray of unexpected light.



POEMS FROM JOSEPH TOMPSON'S  
MANUSCRIPT JOURNAL





# I

“A short memoriall & Reuew of sum Vertues  
in that exemplary Christian Mary Tompson  
Who Dyed in march 22: 1679. penned for the  
imitation of the liueing.”

Of all the treasure which this world doth hould,  
Tru saints are best, whose price transcendeth gould;  
& of all Cumforts which Concern this life,  
None to be found like to a Vertuous wife.  
Our proto parent was enuirond round  
With Rarest things, yet no Content he found  
Till such an one was formed by his side,  
With whom he might Conuers, in whom Confide,  
With out which Comfort all our sweets are sowers  
And families bear thissels without floures.  
And here if any whear it may be said  
Lyes the Content of her lamenting head, 12  
His Dearest Choice, his Credit & his Crown,  
A sweet example to a Christian Town,  
Whose life was made of innocence & loue,  
Whose Death doth all to great Compassion moue.  
Tis hard to tell, where loue did beare such sway,  
Who twas Commanded or who did obey.  
The swetest titles euer past betwene 19  
A Christian paire, & Deeds, might here be seen.  
A Choicer spirit hardly Could be found  
For Uniuersall uirtue on the ground:  
One who betimes gaue Up her uirgin heart  
To Christ, with solemn uows neuer to part,  
And when she Changd her state she did attend

Such Dutyes as Concernd the maryage end.  
 With louely Clusters Round on euery side  
 The house of god, & hers, she butified;  
 Zeal to whose worship in her Constant Ways  
 Makes her an obiect of transendant prays.  
 What entercourse twixt heau'n & her I guess,  
 Besides what others did to me Confess,  
 Makes me Enrole her Reall saint indeed,  
 For whom her turtle may both weep & bleed. 34  
 Ask but the neighbour hood & they will tell  
 She was a Dorcas in our israell,  
 Ready on euery hand to run or spend,  
 To sick and pore to minister & lend,  
 So amiable in her whole Conuers,  
 The least we Can is to lament her hears.  
 But twas a stock in hand only on trust, 41  
 Which to Returne upon Demand is iust;  
 Our intrest houlds no longer; heauens decree  
 Must giue a supersedeas unto the,  
 Her wedded Consort, from those bitter Cyes; 45  
 She is aboue, a mortall that ner dyes.  
 Tis tru she might haue liued many a year  
 & still haue shone in her Domestick sphear;  
 She might haue made your louely number up,  
 & you a while adjournd that bitter Cup;  
 You might haue liud both long & sweet as euer —  
 Yet in the end the sword of Death must seuer.  
 The faster loue is twisted in the heart,  
 With Roots Confirmd, the harder tis to part.  
 She might haue pind a way with tedious mone,  
 But her Dispatch is quick, shees quickly gone.  
 Two liues in one panting foe; Double breath 57  
 She yeilds up, both in to the arms of Death.  
 Well may our teares at such a loss run ore,

When such as loue most Dear must se no more.  
Well may her Consort Call this Marys Day; 61  
Deaths bitterness hath swept his ioyes a way  
But lett in hers, at once, or lett her in  
Such Chambers where neuer entered sin.  
No Tears or pains, nor what brings Cross or wo,  
The Climate where she is shall euer know.  
Should soule & body both possess one graue,  
Relations then Could small Refreshment haue;  
While we discharg poore dutys to the Dust,  
Her soule triumphant is among the iust.  
Could heuen one glimps of passion once retaine,  
Sheed Chide those teares of, & make you refrain.  
Now all her prayers & hopes are spedd;  
Her memory suruiues her body Dead.  
Let her example as a Coppy stand  
To Childrens Children upon euery hand;  
Talk of her sayings, one to another tell  
What in her life you haue obserued well;  
Follow her steps & imitate her life,  
Who was a Virtuuous uirgin, mother, wife.  
So when Deaths summons treats you in such wise,  
You may, with greatest Comfort, Close your eys.

B. T.

## II

“Upon the Death of yt desireable young uirgin, Elizabeth Tompson, Daughter of Joseph & Mary Tompson of Bilerika, who Deseased in Boston out of the hous of Mr legg, 24 august, 1712, aged 22 years.”

A louely flowr Cropt in its prime  
 By Deaths Cold fatall hand;  
 A warning hear is left for all  
 Ready prepar'd to stand.  
 For none Can tell who shall be next,  
 Yet all may it expect;  
 Then surely it Concerneth all,  
 Their time not to neglect.  
 How many awfull warnings that  
 Before us oft are sett,  
 That as a flameing sword to mind  
 Our youth hath often mett,  
 To stop them in their Cours  
 & mind them of their end,  
 To make them to Concider  
 Whither their ways to tend.  
 We se one suddainly taken hence  
 That might haue liud as long  
 For the few years sheed liued hear  
 As any she liued among.  
 Her harmles blameless life  
 Will stand for her defence,  
 And be an honour to her name  
 Now she is gone from hence.

16

17

*a suplliment.*

Charity bids us hope that sheel among those uirgins  
be, 25  
When Christ shall Com to rain, 26  
Whome he will own a mong the wise,  
& for his entertain.

III

“Anagram made by mr John Willson of Boston  
upon the Death of Mr<sup>s</sup> Abigaill Tompson,  
And sent to her husband in uirginia, while  
he was sent to preach the gospell yr.”

i am gon to all bliss

The blessed news i send to the is this:  
That i am goon from the unto all bliss,  
Such as the saints & angells do enjoy,  
Whom neither Deuill, world, nor flesh anoiy.  
To bliss of blisses i am goon: to him  
Who as a bride did for him selfe me trimm.  
Thy bride i was, a most unworthy one,  
But to a better bridegroom i am gon,  
Who doth a Count me worthy of him selfe,  
Tho i was neuer such a worthles elfe. 10  
He hath me Cladd with his own Righteousness,  
And for the sake of it he doth me bless.  
Thou didst thy part to wash me, but his grace  
Hath left no spott nor wrinkle on my face.  
Thou little thinkst, or Canst at all Conceiue,  
What is the bliss that i do now receiue.  
When oft i herd thē preach & pray & sing  
I thought that heauen was a glorious thing,

And i belieud, if any knew, twas thou.  
 That knewest what a thing it was; but now  
 I se thou sawest but a glimps, and hast  
 No more of heauen but a little tast,  
 Compāred with that which hear we see & haue, 23  
 Nor Canst haue more till thou art past the graue.  
 Thou neuer touldst me of the Tyth, nor yet  
 The hundred thousand thousand part of it.  
 Alas, Dear Soule, how short is all the fame  
 Of the third heauens, where i translated amm! 28  
 O, if thou euer louest me at all,  
 Whom thou didst by such loueing titles Call,  
 Yea, if thou louest Christ, (as who doth more?)  
 Then do not thou my Death too much deplore.  
 Wring not thy hand, nor sigh, nor mourn, nor weep,  
 All tho thine Abigaill be faln a sleep.  
 Tis but her body — that shall ryse again;  
 In Christs sweet bosomb doth her soule remain.  
 Mourn not as if thou hadst no hope of me;  
 Tis i, tis i haue Caus to pittie thee.  
 O turne thy sighings into songs of prais  
 Unto the name of god; lett all thy Days  
 Be spent in blessing of his name for thiss:  
 That he hath brought me to this place of bliss.  
 It was a blessed, a th[r]ice blessed, snow  
 Which to the meeting i then waded through,  
 When piercd i was upon my naked skinn  
 Up to the middle, the deep snow within.  
 There neuer was more happie way i trodd,  
 That brought me home so soone unto my god  
 Instead of Braintry Church; Conducting mee  
 Into a better Church, where now i see,  
 Not sinfull men, But Christ & those that are  
 Fully exempt from euery spot & skarr



Of sinfull guilt, where i no longer need  
Or word or seale my feeble soul to feede,  
But face to face i do behould the lamb,  
Who down from heauen for my saluation Came,  
And thither is asended up again,  
Me to prepare a place whear in to Raighn,  
Where we do allways hallaluiahs sing, 59  
Where i do hope for the to Come err long  
To sing thy part in this most glorious song.

## IV

“The Amiable uirgin memorized — Elizabeth  
Tompson, who deceased in Boston, at M<sup>r</sup>  
leggs, august 22, 1712.”

Anagram: o i am blest on top.

“The height of heauenly loue no soule can know,  
Till Death disects the knots of flesh below.  
Aboue the sunn, beyond the orbs of light,  
Is built a Cyty filld with all delight,  
Where no less person then the son of god,  
Our light, our life, Saints king, maks his abode.  
Hear in a pallace, heauens fair nunnerye, 7  
Chast uirgins haue faire entertainment free,  
And such as sought his fauour upon earth  
Enioy their purest loue in sacred mirth.  
Great Jesus daily steps of his bright throne  
And giues them hart embraces euery one.  
He lou'd me, me, when i was but uery young,  
And seated me his uirgin tribes among.  
I Dare not tell what hear in hart i find, 15

All tho i left most Christian friends behind.  
 Christ lou<sup>e</sup>d me in my short morning dawn;  
 With Cords of loue he hath me upward drawn.  
 All wedding ornaments he for me hath made,  
 And me unworthy in his bosom laid.  
 Dear parents, for your prayers i Dayly prais,  
 Who nurtered me so well in early days.  
 Religious tutors giue a blessed lift  
 To infant souls, while millions Run adrift.”  
 Clowded with teares, where mourning Clouds I see,  
 I made short use in this apostrophe: 26  
 A louely Cluster on a uine i saw,  
 So faire it did my admiracion draw,  
 Climbing the sun side of an house of prayer  
 & solaceing it selfe in heauenly aire;  
 Yet sudenly upon an eastward blast,  
 The beuty of his boughs was ouer cast,  
 The fairest grapes were pickt of one by one,  
 [The] Dresser loocking like one half undone. 34  
 Thers no undoing while a sauieur liues,  
 Who takes no more than what he lends or giues.  
 Three manly sons, grown up to Comly size, 37  
 Two Daughters, apples in theire parents eyes, 38  
 Pickt out by enuious Death; with us remains  
 Their precious Dust abhorring sin or staine.  
 What importunity in prayer could reach  
 Was handed down in showers from heauen on each—  
 Proximity of blood maks me for beare;  
 All Round her prais her, while i Drop this tear:  
 All Comendations Could befall a maid  
 A tribute to her memory might be paid.  
     A solitary sigh.  
 So many lashes from a fathers hand  
 Make prouidences hard to understand,

Why this befalls the Righteous man, but ye,  
Great sinner, left to wright her Elogie.  
While you in bitēness of soule thuss mourn,  
Pray for youre sinking onely brothers turn.  
I hope you'ue leand the art of selfe deniall; 54  
When faith is actiue, patients beares the triall.  
Keep in y<sup>e</sup> use of such Angellic graces;  
Twill make you Cherefull, till you se their faces.  
Your streams of grief, when you are percht aboue  
Will all be swallowed up in th' abyss of loue.  
A mazing loue, o what a sight is hear,  
Where jesus raigns & euery saint appear;  
Such as on earth their uirgin loue exprest,  
With hyest potentates Com hear a brest;  
"How euer there i was but mean & low,  
My loue hath Clothed mee from top to toe.  
My hart had faild me in the milkie way,  
Had i not his right hand where on to stay,  
Who led me to the mount of pleasures top,  
Where i all flowers of paradise do Crop.  
Pray, in this lodgeing where i find sweet Rest,  
Let not your sighs nor groans mine ears molest;  
Sweet mother, close mine eys & turn aside,  
My Jesus sends for me;" Thus said, she dyed.

*Joseph Tompson notes after the last line: "By my Dearest Brother Beniamin Tompson."*

## V

“transcribed march 2, 1722-3, upon thr  
 Death of my Dear honoured father, Mr  
 William Tompson, pastor of the Church of  
 Christ in Braintry, Decemb. 10, 1666,  
 whose dying words were: ‘loue the lamb,  
 loue, loue the lamb.’ pend by that holy  
 man of god, Mr John Willson, the first  
 pastor unto y<sup>e</sup> first Church in boston, that  
 holy reuerend man of god.”

Anagram i: William Tompson, most holy paule  
 mine.

Most holy paule, mine answer was,  
 In my temptacions all,  
 When as the deuill tempted me,  
 As much or more then paul.  
 He did account himselfe to be  
 Of sinners all the Chief;  
 So i my selfe accounted, yet  
 How great was his relief!  
 Nor did the lord Count it enōgh  
 To show him so much grace,  
 But mongst his one ambassadors  
 Gaue him a specill place,  
 And all his labours did so bless,  
 As none Conuerted more,  
 Amongst the gentiles, to the faith —  
 From heauen he had such power.  
 And me, unworthy me, the lord  
 Did pardon through Christs blood;

Yea, as his messenger he sent  
To do his people good  
In england ould, that found it so  
There hath bene not a few,  
Nor hath his blessing been with held  
From me in England new.  
And as paule exercised was  
With trials more then any,  
So he was pleased to uisit me  
With trials more then many:  
Not onely persecutions  
Of proud malignant foos,  
But he hath let the deuill loose  
Me strongly to oppose,  
[A]s he did paule with buffeting  
[Tha]t he was black and blew,  
[S]o th[at he was at his wits end  
[And kne]w not what to do.  
He prayed once, yea, twice, yea, thrice,  
With Cryes importunate,  
Yet Could not his requests obtain  
In his forlorn estate.  
His troubles still remaind and he  
Was tempted more & more  
With diabolicoll Assalts  
Which uexed him full sore,  
And all the answer which ye lord  
Or first or last did giue him,  
Was this: that with suphicient grace  
His spirit should relieue him,  
And Satan, when he did his worst,  
Should not so far preuaile  
As that gods fauour or pauls faith  
Him utterly should faile.

No more it did; no more did mine,  
Tho sumtimes I did think,  
In midst of my temptacions  
I utterly should sink.  
How is it els, that all this while  
So many Darts of hell  
Haue not preuailed from my hart  
Gods spirit to expel?  
How is it els, with uiolenc  
My self i did not kill?  
Which was the deuils strong deuice  
Might he [have] had his will.  
How is it els, that all this while  
I Cast not of the lord,  
Tho he hath seemd to cast of me,  
As of his soule abhord,  
But in my hart haue loued him,  
As peter eu'n then did  
When as his tong once, twice, yea, thrice,  
So fowly him denied?  
And still his word, his ministers,  
His ordinances, saints,  
Haue still to me bene uery dear  
In saddest of my plaints.  
O, let not any think that I  
Was quite of god forsaken,  
Tho with such lamentable fits  
I was so long o're taken.



## VI

This poem follows immediately the one printed just above, and has no separate heading in the Journal, except:

{ William Tompson }  
{ Lo my ionah slumpt } Anagr 2

For lo! my ionah how he slumpt, 1  
In seas and whale so deep,  
Becaus the lords Comandement  
He did refuse to keep.  
And i oft did, and do, Confess  
That i [n]o less deserued,  
As haueing [from] the duties of  
My Calling no less swerued.  
No maruell then that j was cast  
Into the sea & whale,  
And that such horrid, hellish darts  
Against me did preuail.  
But ionah in those wofull dep<sup>th</sup>s  
Did pray unto his god,  
And so haue I done, often times,  
Under his heauie rod.  
How peuish & peruers was he,  
But not so much as I,  
That haue Contested with the lord  
& stood out, stood out stubbornly.  
Yet, o dear brethren that suruiue,  
Do not acount me lost,  
Whome Christ redemed by his blood,  
And at so great a Cost,

Throw price where of, as ionah did  
 A pardon full obtain,  
 So do i now: in Christ his lap  
 My soul doth now remain.  
 With ionah now I me Cast ashore;  
 The whale Could not me keep;  
 But in my sauour iesus Christ,  
 I swetly fell asleep.  
 If paul & ionah will not serue  
 To satisfie your mind,  
 Concider job, & be not like  
 To his unfriendly friends.  
 Becaus he was in satans hand  
 So long in deep distress,  
 They iudged him an hipocrite,  
 And sum think me no less.  
 But iob was job from first to last,  
 Highly by god approued,  
 By whome his most Censorious friends  
 Most sharply wear reprobued.  
 As iob was gold, when at the first,  
 God Cast him in the fire,  
 So forth he came as gold most pure,  
 E'uen as you would desire;  
 And in his sore temptation,  
 Once & againe he spake  
 As if the man of patients  
 Were weary of his yoake;  
 Yet well we know how god made his  
 Captiuitye return,  
 And doubly he did recompenc  
 What long did make him mourn.  
 O, what a blessed end did god  
 For his pore seruant make,

50

54

And of pore me, not less but more  
Compassion did he take;  
For now, amongst his angels all  
& saints, in heauen j sing  
With solemn hallalugies to  
My reconciled king.  
Concider Asaph with heman,  
Good jerymy & Dauid,  
How deep and long their Terroures were,  
Yet they wear surely sauid.  
Concider Mary Magdalen,  
With seuen foul fiends posest,  
What wear her moanes, her syghs & tear[s]:  
Yet found she happie rest,  
Concider, hard by Christ his Cross,  
The miserable thiefe:  
But who had from his mouth & hand  
A more Compleat releif?  
Yea, pray, Concider Christ himself,  
The prince of our saluation:  
Was euer soul or body in  
So great a tribulation?  
Of men, yea, & of god him self,  
O how was he forsaken!  
Yet from his hellish Torments all,  
At last to heauen up taken  
To highest glory; twas in him  
That I did put my trust,  
And in his righteousnes i stood  
Before my father just,  
When at the lowest ebb; and now  
My soul with him doth rest,  
Of joys & Consolations  
Unspeakably posest.

John Wilson.

## VII

“Upon the Death of M<sup>r</sup> William Tompson,  
pastour of the Church in Braintry, who  
dyed 10<sup>th</sup> of the 10<sup>th</sup> month, Etati sue 68.  
1666.”

## Epitaph

Here lies his corps, who, while he drew his breath,  
He liued the liuely portrature of Death,  
A walking tomb, a liueing sepulcher,  
In which blak meloncholy did interr  
A blessed soule, which god & nature haue  
By Death deliuerd from yt liueing graue.  
By this thine epitaph, now thou art gon:  
Thy death it was thy resurection. 7

Here lyes his Corps, whose spirit was diuine,  
Too rich a relict for an earthly shrine,  
A secret temple closd, where in his god  
By solitudes of fellowship abode.  
His gifts, his grace, his life, his light, retir'd,  
He liud by life immediatly inspir'd.  
Black darkness oft the Child of light befalls,  
Yet he had sumtimes lucid enteruales.  
Then let this epitaph to him be giuen:  
Darkness dispelled by the light of heauen.

He did outliue his life; twas time to dye,  
He shall out liue his death eternally.  
Wele not lament his timely Death, for why  
Twas death to liue, his life to dye;  
But yet we cannot Chuse but sigh to se  
A saint to make a Dark Catastrophe.

Then sleep, swete saint, & rest thy weary dust;  
Sing requems to thy selfe among the just.  
We hope ere long with y<sup>e</sup> to bear our part[s];  
This epitaph to wright upon our hearts:  
Sleep in this tomb till Christ ungraue thy dust,  
Untill the resurection of the just.

Samuell Torrey.

## VIII

William Tompson, anagram 1; lo, now i am past ill.

Why wepe yea still for me, my Children dear?  
What Cause haue ye of sorow, grief or fear?  
Lo, now all euill things are past and gone,  
Terror, black Coller & strangullion;  
My pains are Curd, no greif doth me anoy,  
My sorrows all are turned in to joy.  
No fiend of hell shall hence forth me asay,  
My fears are heald, my teares are wipt away;  
Gods reconciled face j now behold,  
He that dispersd my darkness many fold;  
In Abrams bosom now i swetely rest,  
Of perfect joy & hapiness posest.

4

## IX

William Tompson, Anagram 2: now i am slipt home.

Fowr years twice tould i dwelt in darkest Cell,  
In Cruell bonds of melloncholy bound.  
I surely thought I was in lowest hell;  
Much pain & grife, but no releif, i found.  
But now throw grace my weighty Chain is loosd,

God hath returnd my long Captiuity; 6  
 My weary soul, that Comfort oft refusd,  
 This day is set at perfect liberty;  
 And now i dwell at home with Christ, my lord,  
 With robes of righteousness most richly Clad;  
 With rarest pleasures the highest heauens aford,  
 Feasted, refresh:d, beyond exp̄rienc glad. 12  
S. Danforth

## X

## Epitaph.

Judicious Zeal, New Englands boanerges,  
 Lyes tombles — not to spare the Churches Charges,  
 But that the world may know he wants no tomb 3  
 Who in ten thousand harts Comanded room.  
 While thus the thundring Text man hidden lies,  
 Sum uirgins slumber, others wantonize. 6  
B[enjamin] T[ompson]

## XI

Verses on Benjamin Tompson, by his sister,  
 Anna Hayden, headed in Joseph Tompson's  
 journal: "sent unto me by friend."

Ah, my dear brother, tho your gone,  
 I do you often think upon,  
 Of your great kindness shown to me  
 In my greatest extremity.  
 You all ways had a friendly Care



Of what might be for my wellfare,  
And often did me Councell giue  
How i should walk and happi liue.  
But now your gon, and left me hear,  
A place of sorow, Care & fear.  
I hope that you'e attaind that rest  
Where nothing there will you molest,  
Where i do hope ere long to be,  
Wheres better times & Company.  
Yow'ue left me caus of great Content:  
Before your life was fully spent,  
Many a time we walk't together  
& with discorce haue pleasd each other.  
(Sum yt haue wondred how i could find  
Discours with you to pleas your mind.)  
But we must now discours no more,  
As we weare ust to do before,  
And mourn as much as any among;  
But time is short, & then ile sing another song.  
Youe brōght up many plants  
That are plants of renown  
And, now that you are taken henc,  
Ad luster to your Crown,  
To our dear father showd respect  
And dutie to him neuer did neglect.  
He to his friends was all ways kind —  
On all ocations they did find  
A reddy and comprizeing wit —  
& all ways had [an] answer fit,  
That sumtimes maizd the ignorant,  
But pleasing to the wise,  
That did his wit & learning highly prize.  
“Speak well of the liueing, dont reproach the dead,”  
This was his Councell might in his lif be read;

Be not fond of liueing, yet prepard to dye,  
 Was his aduice to me in mine extremity.  
 Courtious to all, both high & low,  
 And due respect to all & euery one did show.  
 Thus we daily drop away & take our flight  
 Both from each others Company & sight.  
 Did we but realize what we daily see,  
 Other manner of persons we should be:  
 Not so Concernd for things thats here below,  
 Not knowing how soone we from henc must go.  
 Here we haue seen, with in a little space,  
 Chang upon Chang, & many run y<sup>r</sup> Race,  
 Who, may be, thought but little of death or dyin[g],  
 Or litle minded how their time was flying.  
 O hapie they, that are prepard to dye,  
 And are Conuinced of this worlds uanity,  
 And haue made sure of a more hapī pl[ace]!  
 There soules are now in a most hapie c[ase.]

*At the end of the poem Joseph Tompson has written:  
 "these sent unto me by my deare sister Anna from  
 brantry, her lamentation ouer her dear brother & mine  
 only brother Beniamin, which i haue, and noted, not  
 for the poetry, but for the loue & spirit of Christian  
 spirit breathing in them."*

## JOHN WILSON'S A SONG OF DELIVERANCE

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*Song of*  
**DELIVERANCE**  
FOR THE  
*Lasting Remembrance*

OF GODS WONDERFUL WORKS  
never to be FORGOTTEN.

Containing in it the wonderful defeat of the SPANISH-  
ARMADO, Anno, 1588. the woful Plague, Anno, 1603.  
soon upon the Entrance of King James of famous memo-  
ry, unto the Crown of ENGLAND.

With the discovery of the POWVDER PLOT, Anno, 1605.  
and down Fall of *BLACK FRIERS*, when an hellish  
Crew of Papists met to hear *Drury* a Popish Priest, An. 1623.

Also the grievous Plague, Anno, 1625. with Poems both Latin  
and English, and the Verses of that Learned *Theodore Beza*.

By that Reverend, and eminent man of God, Mr. *John Wilson*,  
formerly Christs faithful Shepherd in *Sudbury*, in *Suffolk* in  
*great Britain*, where these heavenly Poems, and spiritual  
Songs were Compiled, and at *London* printed, Anno,  
1626. since Pastor to the first Church of Christ in  
*Boston* in *New-England*.

For the sake of several who have much desired to see and  
read this work, it is reprinted.

Psal. 107. 8. *Oh that men would praise the Lord for  
his goodness, and his wonderful works to  
the Children of men.*

*Boston*, Printed in the Year, 1 6 8 0.





## Christian Reader.

*Considering how exceedingly pretious the remembrance of this heavenly man of God is (whose Poems these are) unto all that knew him, yea, and the thoughts of that sacred ashes locked up within his Tomb, the thoughts of whom is enough to cause Fountains to run over, and to trickle down mine Eyes, and the Eyes of all tender hearts that loved him, this emboldneth me to present unto you this heavenly Song. Endited by him, or rather the holy Spirit of God unto him many years agoe, hoping they will find acceptanec with you, os he had a fluent strain in Poetry, (o how excellent was the matter contained in the same, being full of Direction, Correction, and Consolation, suiting much unto spiritual Edification. What Volumes hath he penned for the help of others in their several changes of condition, which if they were all compiled together, would questionless make a large Folio. How was his heart full of good matter? He was another sweet singer of Israel, whoss heavenly Verses passed like to the handkerchief carryed from Paul to help and uphold disconsolate ones, and to heal their wracked Souls, by the effectual prisence of Gods holy Spirit. Seeing those are not so visible unto the World, be pleased to peruse these, redivived by this present Impression, wherein we may observe what were Gods former mercyes towards his People in great Brittain, his wonderful mercy to King, Peers, and People, and unto our Fathers; when the Spanish Popish Plot was dashed in pieces, and the half Moon of their Navy, (whose horns stood seven mile asunder) was shattred into Confusion. Gods Judge-ments also in the two dreadfull plagues (which are mentioned in this Book) and Gods healing hand. The discovery also, and defeating the hellish Powder Plot.*

*The woful downfall at Black Fryers, where Drury with many of his Attendants breathed their last breath. What sayth Asaph, Psal. 78.2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. I will open my mouth in a Parable, I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard, and known, and our Fathers have told us, we will not hide them from their Children, which should be born, who should arise, and declare them unto their Children, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God: but keep his Commandments: And what can be more suitable to read over, then what is here presented. Considering (as heretofore) the Devil with his Instruments have contrived to swallow up that famous Kingdome, and the Church of Christ in it, so now, are not all the Devils of Hell, with such whom they employ, busying themselves to batter down the walls of Zion, and to make breaches at the gates thereof, that so they might execute the utmost Butcheries that can be invented, thereby to overthrow the Kingdome of Christ here on Earth in every place? but that God who hath been the refuge of his People hitherto, that overthrew the Egyptians at the red Sea, that destroyed Sisera with his Army, he can save his People now in all places. Only let us thankfully remember Gods former mercyes shewed to his people in both Englands, really and unfeignedly repent of whatsoever we have provoked him with; Call and cry earnestly to him, and trust in the only Rock of Jesus Christ, who is our hope and Salvation for ever. Take in good part what is here presented to you from the Son of him who is deceased, so pretious a Father, who heartily wisheth your welfare, and the peace of all Gods Israel.*

Imprimatur.

*James Allen.*

Yours to serve in Christ Jesus

*John Wilson.*



*The Introduction from out of the XXXI. of  
Deuteronomy, where God chargeth Moses to  
make his Song.*

**B**Ehold thou shalt with thy fore-Fathers sleep,  
As for this People, [whom thou art to leave  
“They will not long my Testimonies keep,  
“Though now they seem to them so fast to cleave]  
“But they will rise up [after thou art gone,  
“To scorn my word, and trample it upon]  
“After the Gods a whoring will they run,  
“Of the strange People which are in the Land,  
“Whither they are to take possession,  
[“And them amongst to fix their wandring band.]  
“Me will they cast away, (and are so weak)  
“My [holy Cov’nant, made with them to break.  
“Then shall my wrath against them kindled be,  
“Even in that day [my fury shall be hot,]  
“Them I’l forsake, that have forsaken me,  
“And hide my face from them that me forgot.  
“And they shall of their foes be eaten up,  
“Tasting of heavy woe and bitter cup.  
“So that themselves shall be inforc’t to say,  
“In midst of sorrow [came not all these woes,  
“On us, because our God is gone away,  
“Mong us no longer to have his repose?]  
“I will from them in hiding hide my face,  
“That evils-all, and other Gods embrace.  
“Now therefore write you, for your selves, this Song,  
“Which thou mayst teach the Isralytish fry,

"Putting the same into their mouth, [and tongue]  
 "That it for me 'gainst them may testify;  
 "For I will them into the Country lead,  
 "By Oath unto their Fathers promised.  
 "[The Country,] which with milk and hony flows,  
 "Where, having eat their fill and waxen fat,  
 "Vnto strange Gods they will their heart dispose,  
 "And worship them [upon their faces flat,]  
 "But me they will contemptuously provoke,  
 "Breaking my Cov'nant, [casting off my yoke.]  
 "And it shall be, when many evils-sore  
 "Shall them befall, and make them much complain.  
 "This Song shall witness, [if there were no more,]  
 "(In mouth of all their Seed still to remain)  
 "That I foreknew, what's in their heart or hand  
 "Before I bring them to the promis'd Land.  
 Who so would see this song of heav'nly choice,  
 Penn'd by that holy Shepherd, Isrells guide,  
 And sweetly uttered with a swan-like voyce,  
 When here his Soul no longer might abide;  
 Let him unto that holy Fountain goe,  
 From whence such streams do plentifully flow.  
 Nor shall he need to think his time mispent: *Deut. 32*  
 For what is there to Israel committed,  
 Hath a more large and general extent,  
 And to our present times may well be fitted.  
 Now is that wall of separation [d]own,  
 Now that is ours, which then was their Renown.  
 And oh that in their holy Name alone,  
 And other graces, we did them succeed!  
 Oh that their falshood and rebellion  
 Had not in us like bitter root and breed!  
 Oh that by their Example we might see,  
 Such thoughts, such deeds, such sorrows how to  
 flee,

For us another Canan is provided  
Far better; better milk, and better honey,  
We look our Spirits should ere long be guided,  
To Heav'n it self, where without price or money,  
We shall enjoy what here we may but tast,  
A joyful-blessed life for aye to last.

Oh then! what manner ones should we be here?  
And how refin'd should be both life and heart?  
Not like this world, but like our Country dear,  
Where none but holy ones have any part.

We need not fear these Cananites to follow:

Who be all perfect, none unsound or hollow.

Yee that in Sion are secure, awake;  
Yee that do waver in a Sea of doubt,  
How long wil't be, ere the right way ye take,  
Halting no more, or compassing about?

Or God, or Baal, Christ, or Masse adore;

Choose which you will: serve one, but halt no more.

Remember who it is that witness bare,

"Even that *Amen* the witness true and sure, 80

"Who made all Creatures to be what they are,

"I know thy works [they cannot proof endure]

"Thou art not cold, nor art thou hot enough,

"I would thou wert key cold, or hot in love.

"Sith then that Luke-warm is the frame and mold

["Which all this while after all my cost,]

"Thou hast attained; neicher hot nor cold

["So that my labour seems to be but lost,]

"I am resolv'd, [Consider what I say]

"Out of my mouth to spew thee quite away.

Oh heavy doom, how can we chuse but tremble!

"We say we're rich, and full, and nothing need:

"But God knows all; [he knows how we dissemble]

"Poor, wretched-Caytifes, without sight or weede;



“Buy then of him, gold, Robes, and Ointment  
bright,

“Rich, cloth’d, to make us; and of clearer sight.  
Then shall we see the end of all his Threts,  
[That he an holy awe might keep us in;]  
And why his naked glittering Sword he whets,  
[That we might well repent us of our sin;]

And why he doth such strange deliv’rance send,  
[That we might praise him, and our lives amend.]  
This very end it was that moved me,  
(Though not so fit, to undertake the Taske,)  
To frame this Song, or Story (as you see)  
(Be sure the liquor’s good, what ere the caske.)

For here, as in a glass you may behold,  
The works that God hath wrought, some new, some  
old.

Yet none so old, but young men may remember  
The farthest works that here I shall recite,  
Have they been hid as under heaps of ember?  
Now will I take them up into the light.

Indeed they are not hid, but men are blind,  
And loth to call the works of God to mind.  
For diverse worthy ones with faithful pen,  
Have writ the most that I am writing here,  
Calling to th’ praise of God, unthankful men  
(Which might their Souls unto his grace endear)

But oh! how few do prize such godly pains,  
Or reap unto themselves such profer’d gains?  
Yet will I venture; all are not alike;  
God will have praises (for they be his due),  
A silly rod the stony Rock may strike,  
A silly Song forgotten works renew.

If men be mute, then babes; if babes, an Asse  
Or else the stones, shall bring Gods will to pass.



And if you'l have me tell you all my heart,  
 'Tis not my hope (yet would I not presage)  
 That *men* will take my plainness in good part.  
 But come, ye children, ye of tender Age,  
 This unto you I write, and thus in Verse,  
 That ye might best conceive, learn, and rehearse.  
 Come Children, hearken and consider well,  
 Gods Word will teach you best, but works withal  
 (Such works as I shall very plainly tell)  
 Will teach you, how with fear on God to call.  
 Thou Lord, which dost the little ones affect,  
 Let this poor Song thy little ones recall.



A Song of Thanksgiving for the lasting  
 Remembrance of Gods wonder-  
*ful work, never to be forgotten.*

**F**Irst, I'le begin with Eighty eight,  
 That most admyred year,  
 When't was in king of Spains conceipt  
 Ore's all to domineer.  
 The Seas were spred with stately saile,  
 their Men and their Munition  
 Were all prepared without faile  
 to bring us to perdition.  
 How many scores of Shipping-tall,  
 and of their Gallyes long!  
 How many Regiments withal  
 of Souldiers stout and strong!

How many hundred Horse to prounce,  
and Mules for carriage meet!

13

How many thousand Ordinance  
were carryed in the Fleet!

How many hundred thousand pound  
of Powder and of Bullet!

How many millions were found  
of victuals for the Gullet!

Who so would make a just account  
must reckon for the least,

For to such number all amount  
as cannot be exprest.

Besides, great store and company  
of tearing torturing Whips,

25

And instruments of cruelty,  
provided in their Ships;

As meaning not to be so kind,  
our blood at once to spill,

But by our lingring pain, their mind  
and bloody lusts to fill.

From seven years old, (or if not so,  
from ten and so forth on)

All had been kill'd, both high and low,  
their Sword could light upon.

Virgins had dyde, when they had first  
the Virgins honour lost:

Women unript, on Spears accurst,  
had seen their Infants tost.

The children, whom they meant to save,  
with brand of Iron hot,

Were in their face (like Indian slave,)  
to bear a seared spot.

Their Soul (alas) had been a spoyle  
to Soul-destroying Pope;

Their bodyes spent in restless toyle,  
without all ease or hope.  
There were but few that should obtain  
this mercy, which was such  
As if you reckon up the gaine,  
You'l say it was not much.  
Yea, they that serv'd the Romish gods  
had been within the hemme  
Of Spanish sword, which knew no odds  
(or small) twixt us [and] them.  
For death of Catholicks (quoth they)  
we need not to be sorry:  
Their Souls shall goe the Catholick way;  
to Heaven or Purgatory.  
As for their wealth and dignity,  
all this for us doth make;  
For all (how much so ere it be,)  
shall fall unto our stake.  
Oh blessed Souls! whatbetter course  
the highest heaven to merit,  
Then if such Catholicks, perforce,  
their lands and goods inherit?  
"Such Catholicks as had the Popes  
69  
"most solemn blessing past,  
"To all that would their wealth and hopes,  
"into this Navy cast —  
"For (you must know) the Popes Crusade  
73  
"was sent, or gentle Bull,  
"To all that would this great Armade,  
"enrich with purses full.  
"Or, gave thereto a lesser fleece;  
"who so gave what they could,  
"Were quit, for thirteen pence a piece,  
"of all sins new and old

- "Thus went the Host to Sea with fame,  
    "renowned there to brave it;  
" *The invincible Navy* was the name 83  
    "their holy Father gave it.  
"Nor doubted they to make their Song  
    "of triumph before hand,  
"As if already Spanish throngs  
    "had conquered our land.  
" *Mendoz'* mendaciously begun, 89  
    "in *France* to give it out,  
" [*England* is won, all *England* won, 91  
    "their forces put to rout.]  
" *Medyna* was the Admiral  
    "of this new Christned Fleet,  
"Who left his wife, friends, goods and all,  
    "in zeal (but indiscreet.)  
"He sought to Christ and *Mary* both,  
    "and to all Saints beside;  
"Sole Christ to credit very loth,  
    "in doubtful wind and tide.  
"Our little Fleet in July first,  
    "their mighty Fleet did view:  
"She came but with a softly course, 103  
    "though winds behind her blew.  
"Her front much like the Moon was crook't,  
    "(the horns seven miles asunder)  
"Her Mastes like stately Towers look't,  
    "the Ocean groaning under.  
"And now behold they were at hand,  
    "daring our English Borders,  
"Making full sure to bring our Land  
    "Under their Spanish orders:  
But God above, laughing to scorne  
    their wicked wile and wealth,

To his Anointed rais'd an horne  
 of hope and saving health.  
 "Prince, Prophets, people, joyntly cry'd  
 "TO CHRIST ALONE for ayd;  
 "Whose power invincible was try'd  
 "with Banner all displayd.  
 "That noble *Drake* drave on apace, 121  
 "and made the Spaniard dive;  
 "And *Hawkins* follow'd hard the chase,  
 "them all away to drive.  
 "With these, well forbidst *Forbisher*,  
 "their Navy did assayle:  
 "All at her back did thunder her  
 "and swept away her tayle.  
 "Those were the Worthies three, which first,  
 "(next to their Admiral)  
 "Ventur'd the hostile ranks to burst,  
 "(spight of their *Don-Recall*)  
 "And many moe of great renowne  
 "did bravely play their part,  
 "In skill and valour putting downe  
 "the Spanish strength and art.  
 "But why do I record the men,  
 "that fought with such as brav'd us?  
 "I said, (and so I say agen,) 140  
 "[It was the Lord that sav'd us.]  
 He arm'd from Heaven his mighty Hoast,  
 to batter Babel's Towers:  
 His Angels (though unseen) oppos'd  
 their side, and helped ours.  
 "They which to creatures yield the trust  
 "from the Creator taken,  
 "Of him and them it is most just  
 "they should be quite forsaken.

The blustering winds, the swelling waves,  
the crackes of flashing fire,  
Each in their turn did check the braves  
of Spains intraged Ire.  
Eight of our Ships, of wild-fire, pitch,  
Rosen, and brimstone full,  
And such like other matter which  
was most combustible,  
Were set on fire; and (guided well)  
in secret of the night,  
By help of wind, it them befell  
on Spanish Fleet to light.  
The Spaniards saw how near they came,  
(at Anchor as they lay,)  
The Sea all-bright with shining flame  
(as if it had been day.)  
Who fearing lest our Ships (beside  
the hurt of fierie crack)  
Might with some deadly Engines ride,  
unto their utter wrack:  
All lifting up with one consent  
an hideous woful cry,  
Did fill with bitterest lament  
the Ocean and the Sky.  
Some pull up Anchors, some for hast  
their massie Cables cut:  
They set up Sayles, and all agast,  
their hand to Owers put.  
And, smitten with a pannick terror,  
confusedly they fled,  
As whom their own bewitching error,  
To shame and sorrow led.  
They fled with shame, the way they came,  
one from another scattred:



Their Shipping tall with Cannon ball,  
 was soundly beat and battred.  
 Their reckning was, that *Parmoes* Duke 185  
 should help them with his force;  
 But God his courage did rebuke,  
 from taking such a course.  
 'Tis best, thought he, for me and mine,  
 to keep us where we are;  
 For they (we see) are fain to whine,  
 that ventured so farre.  
 Our Holland-friends with us kept watch, 193  
 upon the coast of *Flanders*:  
 He might have soon met with his match,  
 if not with his Commanders.  
 Yet at the last he was so stout, 197  
 when to the Lady of *Hall*,  
 His vowes were paid on knees devout)  
 his Armed Troops to call;  
 With whom he did to *Dunkerk* pass  
 (but later then was meet)  
 So that by some he twitted was,  
 as false to Spanish Fleet.  
 Thus where they left of God and men, 205  
 to wracks of wind and weather.  
 Their thoughts were high before, but then,  
 they fainted altogether.  
 They came not forth so thick before;  
 but now they went as thin,  
 Their numbers were abated sore,  
 that numberless had bin.  
 "As *Saul* did *Amalek*, or worse,  
 "they vow'd us all to handle,  
 "As whom their *Balaam* did curse 215  
 "with Book, and Bell, and Candle.

“But they themselves combining thus,  
“where the true *Amalex*-brood,  
“of God accurst for cursing us,  
“in their malicious mood.  
“Themselves were made a gazing stock,  
“a by-word and reproach,  
“Upon the Israelitish flock,  
“presuming to encroach.  
Thus might they ban their Idol gods,  
with discontented lours,  
And well perceive the mighty odds,  
between *their* faith and *ours*.  
“For though sometime, the way is not  
“best, that hath best success:  
“And ’t may be holy Sions lot,  
“to suffer great distress:  
“Nor is a Church prov’d good or ill,  
“by any outward things;  
“But that is known for Sion-hill  
“that Scripture warrant brings:  
“Yet such as Idols do adore,  
“or Christ an Idol make,  
“Preferring Idols him before,  
“or parting them a stake;  
“What heavy dooms do them abide  
“come from Gods wrath above,  
“As what the Saints doth well betide,  
“confirms them in his love.  
“Thus God in dayes of elder hue  
“did take his peoples part,  
“When Egypts King did them pursue,  
“into the red Seas heart.  
“Their wheels fell of, and Chariots went,  
“Full oft (for all their frowning)

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240

245

"And then by flying back they meant,  
 "to save themselves from drowning.  
 "They said before, *We will them follow,*  
 "*and take, and put to foyle;*  
 "They are a prey for us to swallow,  
 "*and for our Sword to spoyle.*  
 "But by and by they chang'd their Song,  
 "*Oh let us flee apace,*  
 "God doth the Hebrews fight among,  
 "*To kill us in this place.*  
 "For God with sudden winds did blow,  
 "upon the heaped waves,  
 "And made them soon to overflow,  
 "the proud in all their braves.  
 "They sank as led in waters gulph,  
 "Horse, Chariots, men, and all.  
 "The Sheep escap't. the cruel Wolfe  
 "himself did get the fall.  
 "Then *Moses* sang victoriously,  
 "and all his saved Traine,  
 "Led through the Sea most gloriously,  
 "to the dry Land again,  
 "They looked back, and saw their Foes  
 "floating some here, some there,  
 "Whom late and long they feared, those  
 "they caused now to fear,  
 "The women sang with pleasant voyce,  
 "at *Myriams* direction,  
 "Wth dance, and Timbrels merry noyse,  
 "for this so rare protection,  
 What better type of Englands bliss,  
 saved from Spanish fury?  
 The Sea, that was our safety, is  
 a grave our foes to bury.

Even now, we heard of their approach,  
    (who feared not that heard it?  
But by and by, to their reproach,  
    They fled before they feared it.  
Not above fifteen of our Ships, 289  
    did bear the battels brunt,  
Which being light with nimble Skips,  
    did theirs at pleasure hunt,  
Nor was there any shipping lost, 293  
    of ours save only one;  
And that our Enemies dearly cost,  
    (better th'ad let't alone.)  
When many hundreds had been slain 297  
    for one of ours, or less,  
Chased away with broken Traine,  
    they wandred in distress  
With Tempests they were tost and shaken,  
    (all Brittain driv'n about.)  
Some drowned in the deep, some taken,  
    where they could ill get out.  
Some of them cast on Scottish shores, 305  
    (and by the Kings release,  
More then seven hundred Souldiers  
    were sent away in peace.)  
On Irish shores were others cast,  
    who fared not so well,)  
Wild Irish, Fowle, foul Weathers blast,  
    upon these fiercely fell.  
Their Navy, which with wondrous cost, 313  
    was full three years preparing,  
In one Months space was (well nigh) lost,  
    without our cost or caring.  
(I say it was not cost so much  
    or care of ours prevail'd,

But God would have the pride of such  
as fought against him quail'd.)  
Of all their goodly Ships remain'd  
after this dismal War;  
Scarce forty which at all attain'd, 323  
to their own Havens-bar.  
And those that with so much adoe,  
at last arrived thither,  
With heavy hearts needs must they goe  
all rent with War and Weather.  
No sooner came this happy news,  
unto our listning ear,  
But all our sad laments and rues  
were turn'd to merry chear.  
Our VIRGIN-QUEEN with holy dance,  
unto her Timbrel sang,  
Our Land for this Deliverance,  
with shouting-Ecchoes rang.  
Her Soul had marcht (like *Deborah*)  
amidst the armed Train,  
Her Faith had scorn'd with holy laugh  
the bragging Hoast of *Spain*.  
In hottest danger did she rest,  
Upon the Lord she serv'd;  
And him in midst of Triumph blest,  
as he had well deserv'd.  
Unto the house of God she went,  
in royallest array,  
With thankful and devout intent  
her promis'd vows to pay:  
The Nobles her accompaned, 349  
each Citizen in colour,  
(The conquer'd Banners fully spred,  
to make the Triumph fuller.)

The Preacher blaz'd with cheerful voyce,  
our glorious preservation,  
The Temple sounded with the noyse,  
of joyful acclamation.  
Kings *Philips* friends did much condole,  
to see his feats defeated,  
True Brittain lips seem'd with a cole,  
from heavenly Altar heated.  
But, oh alas! the real thanks,  
(which is our lives amending)  
Was far away; men of all ranks,  
their wicked lusts defending.  
God waited long for our return,  
unto a purer straine;  
But we cast off his Word with spurne,  
and horrible disdain.  
This made our God bethink himself,  
how to correct our sin,  
As Father whips his peevish elfe  
that hath unruly bin.  
(When *Pharaohs* Hoast was overthrown,  
yet no due fruit returned,  
The wrath of God against his own,  
gain-saying people burned.)

1603.

And first, our Queen *Elizabeth*  
ended her life and Reign;  
To shew that all hope is a breath,  
soon come, soon gone again;  
Unless as children we depend  
on God the surest stay;  
Unless our hearts we fully bend,  
his pleasure to obey.  
Our grief was great for her decease,  
no lesser was our fear,  
But God did soon our Souls release  
and from all fainting reare.  
Our Sun was set, but rose a fresh,  
our hearts were fill'd with laughter,  
To see King *James* the Crown possess  
so quietly, soon after.  
No Spear against him lifted was,  
at home nor yet abroad,  
All as one man with common voyce,  
his coming did applaud,  
But least we should be overjoy'd,  
and hope beyond all bounds,  
Just then, our Kingdome was annoy'd,  
with Plague that all confounds:  
I say, all such in humane prop,  
as dare to put their trust,  
Not caring all the while to lop,  
or leave their wicked lust.  
Some three and twenty years agoe,  
(or there about) at least,  
God smote the Land with heavy blow  
of this contagious pest.



In three moneths space to death did pine  
(witness the *London-bill*.)  
Thirty four thousand seventy nine,  
yet had not death its fill.  
Three thousand three hundred eighty five,  
in one week did depart,  
And many thousands moe alive,  
remained sick at heart.  
And in each County, City, Town,  
almost all *England* over,  
Men of all sorts were smitten down,  
nor could themselves recover.  
It should have then repented us,  
of our enormous life,  
Whereby we forc't our Father thus  
to wrath and anger rife.  
Though we would not repent, yet he  
repented ne're the less,  
His tender bowels yearn'd to see  
the depth of our distress.  
His bow unbent, his Arrows keen  
were cast behind the back.  
The flames which long full hot had been,  
were made ere long to slack.  
We for all this, resolved not  
more purely God to serve,  
Therefore our foes devis'd a Plot,  
such as our sins deserve.  
'A Plot (to think on) so abhorr'd  
as heart doth fear and quake,  
A Plot, that when I would record,  
my pen and hand do shake.

1605.

**F**ULL twenty years agoe it was,  
 one thousand six hundred five,  
 When Papists, zealous for the Masse,  
 in *England* did contrive;  
 The King, Queen, Peer, and noble Peers,      5  
 the Prelate, Judge, and Knight,  
 And Burgesses, with powder fire  
 all at a clap to smite.  
 At *Dunkerk*, and at *Lambeth* both,  
 they did of things agree,  
 With solemn Sacramental Oath,      11  
 of deepest secrecy.  
 When Spanish Navy had no force,  
 nor Plots of forreign foes,  
 They meant to take a surer course,  
 the scap't bird to enclose.  
 That is, with Art to undermine  
 the house of Parliament,  
 (No fitter place to be the signe,  
 of such a damn'd intent.)  
 There had the cruel Laws been made,      21  
 against their Romish Priests,  
 There will they dig with cruel spade,  
 and meet their mining lists.      24  
 But who would taxe (beside themselves,)  
 of Rigour such a Law,      26  
 As gave the use of life to Elves  
 that had so curst a jaw?  
 A jaw so curstly wide, as would  
 have swallowed at a bit,      30  
 Great Englands head and body, should  
 the Lord have suffred it.

After some digging they discry  
     a Cellar to be near,  
 Which they resolve to hire or buy,  
     should it be ne're so dear.  
 They laid their powder in this Vault,  
     full six and thirty Barrells, 38  
 With one unheard of deep assault,  
     to end their former quarrells.  
 (Note by the way the Romish Whore,  
     hath Barrells in her Cellar.  
 In *March* she brewed, or before, 43  
     bot I'le be bold to tell her;  
*Thy Christmas doth not yet approach* 45  
*why laist thou in so fast?*  
*Before thy time, thou mean'st to broach,*  
*thy brewing will be waste.)*  
 Billets and Faggots hid this stuff 49  
     great stones and iron crowes, 50  
 (To cause a more massacring puffe)  
     were piled under those,  
 Now was Novembers fifth at hand,  
     when ore this hellish pit,  
 Both head and body of the Land  
     were all at once to sit.  
 When furious *Fauxe* with matches three, 57  
     (for spickets) was provided, 58  
 The rest of this fraternity,  
     were very closely sided. 60  
 Monyes they had good store, and horse, 61  
     (some more then was their own.)  
 And thought to gather mighty force,  
     by roving up and down.  
 From *Warwick-shire* to *Woster-shire*,  
     from thence to *Stafford-shire*,

Thinking ere this, all *Westminstir*  
was over-turn'd with fire.  
They made the world believe, they went  
about a hunting-match,  
But for their spoyle and booty, meant  
our Souls and lives to catch.  
When first th'ad got, by force of Arms,  
the Lady *Elizabeths* Grace,  
Not doubting by their Popish charms;  
her Conscience to deface: 76  
And having blown away the King,  
and royal Issue male,  
They thought by Crowning her, to bring  
her will in servile thrall.  
Then had they in her name forth sent 81  
good store of Proclamations,  
Such as might fit with the intent  
of their Imaginations.  
Nor would they father by and by  
the Plot, (though 'twere their own,)  
But meant the infamy should lye  
where it was quite unknown.  
If you would know what kind of man,  
they would have thus traduced,  
Forsooth, it was the Puritan, 91  
(so in their stile abused.)  
Indeed they meant the Protestants,  
should all be under guilt,  
As if the blood of Popish Saints,  
at once they would have spilt.  
A Gull without all wit or sense 97  
(what will not malice say?)  
"The Wolfe can soon find a pretence, 99  
"why the poor Lamb to slay.

No, no: it was the Jesuit,  
and Priests of Popish faction,  
That brought them to this hideous pit,  
though they deny the action.  
Our doctrine loyal is, and course,  
like to our doctrine, loyal;  
They teach, (and put no less in force)  
to crush the Scepter royal,  
Who so their Anti-christian Sect  
will not their favour crown,  
Let him be King, born or elect,  
they'l seek to pull him down.  
And if their strength be not enough,  
to bring about the matter,  
Then Dagger, Dag, Fig, Powder-stuffe, 115  
shall stab, shoot, poison, scatter.  
Thus were their heads and hands at work,  
our State to overthrow,  
Supposing all the while to lurke,  
under some fairer show.  
But all this while they looked not  
to God that view'd them well,  
And layd all-ope their subtle Plot,  
forg'd by the Devil of hell.  
These privy works of wily men,  
so long and close concealed,  
By their own letter, hand, and pen,  
were suddenly revealed.  
The hole was searcht of crafty Cubs,  
and then appeared plain,  
The Wood, Stones, Iron, Gunpowder-tubs,  
and all the powder-train.  
At this Hell-mouth, with triple match,  
(dark Lantern in his hand,)

Stood *Fauxe* in dead of night, to watch,  
and comers to withstand.  
His watching had but ill event,  
when from our watchful King,  
Those noble Patriots were sent,  
to find the secret thing.  
He was in Boots and best array,  
(’twas fit it should be so,  
Being to travail such a way,  
as he least thought to goe.)  
He was not vext so much about  
his taking, or his shame,  
As for his happe to be without,  
when the Kings searchers came;  
Else, he resolv’d, all void of grace,  
(that might have made him quake,)  
Them, and himself, with house and place,)  
a ruinous heap to make.  
About this time the hunting rout,  
that were in Country mounted,  
From Shire to Shire were hunted out,  
and sturdily affronted. 156  
Nor needed greater power rise  
their mutinies to quaille;  
The Sheriffes power did suffice  
to fetch them to the Jayle.  
They look’t that all where ere they post  
should like and help the fact,  
Their reckoning was without the host:  
for all abhorr’d their Act.  
Yea, mark: the house that they were in 165  
(as in a harbour sure,)  
Might well convince them of their sin, 167  
and practising impure. 168

For as their powder was too dry,  
     (wherein they put their trust,)  
 They saw it was but vanity,  
     to hope in fickle dust;  
 Which (touched with a sparke of fire,)  
     hurt them by sudden flash,  
 That were inflam'd with hot desire,  
     the highest Court to quash.  
 So their own powder did them tell,  
     to their own very face,  
 Their powder-workings were from Hell,  
     most barbarous and base.  
 One of them dreamed over-night, 181  
     he saw strange looks and antick;  
 Their morrow-faces in the light,  
     prov'd this no fancy frantick;  
 He dream'd, at the same time, and place,  
     he saw strange tottering steeple,  
 Which did presage the tottring case,  
     of this seduced people.  
 "They say our Churches are their own, 189  
     "our Bells, and Steeples tall,  
 "But striving for possession,  
     "they caught a fearful fall.  
 "They builded Castles in the Sky.  
     "(no marvail if they waver,  
 "The bird may build her nest on high,  
     "(not high enough to save her.)  
 And here it may not be forgot,  
     *Catesby* himself was one,  
 (The first contriver of this Plot,)  
     their powder flasht upon.  
 In stead of whirling into Sky  
     our Parliament, their own



Roof (where they parl'd,) before their Eye,  
into the Sky was blown.

And a great powder-bag, (entire,)  
was blown up therewithal:

Which never taking any fire,  
came down full in the fall.

To shew that God doth over-sway  
both fire and powder strong,

And doth their strength hold or allay,  
as he sees right or wrong

Suppose the fire had toucht the Train  
Under the Parliament,

God could have made them both refrain  
their natural extent.

Themselves were forc't upon this sight,  
Heavens-anger to confess,

And on bent knees (all in a fright)  
their sorrows to express:

"As they, that found the Shepherds rod,

"their devellish feats to quell,

"All trembling at the hand of God

"from their presumption fell.

Thus all their hopes were overthrown,  
and utterly confounded,

And Popish-hunters in their own  
most cruel pit were pounded.

*Catesby* and *Piercy*, brethren sworn,

229

were caught and pierc't together,

Back joyn'd to back, (and all forlorne,)

by one shot, reaching thither.

Two *Wrights* that with their open might,  
against their King rebelled,

Of roisting Rebels had the right,

235

by Sword of Justice quelled.

*Garnetts's* to Gallows guarded sure,  
 [Nor th' straw miraculous, 238  
 Where Limner drew his face demure,  
 sav'd him from dying thus.]  
*Digby* did for their digging pay,  
 on Gibbit mounted up,  
 Two *Winters* went the selfsame way,  
*Keys* dranke of this Cup.  
*Tresham* had tred no other track,  
 if he had liv'd so long,  
*Grant* had his grant, the Rebel-pack,  
 to end his life among.  
*Rookwood*, that would not better look,  
 to hooks of bait-alluring,  
 Was fain like heavy doom to brook,  
 (with shame for ever during.)  
*Fauxe* like a Fox, was hanged high,  
 and *Bates* his strength abated:  
 "Those that in Treason joyne, must dye 255  
 "the death of Traitors hated.  
 "They'r dead, we live, even in their sight:  
 "they'r catcht, we scap't away;  
 "What should have been their day, our night,  
 "is now their night, our day.  
 "Even as those three renowned ones,  
 "in furnace seven times fired,  
 "Were safe preserved. (flesh and bones,  
 "skin, hair, and cloathes unseared:  
 "The smoak devouring at a lick  
 "all them (and all entire)  
 "Which in their malice were so quick,  
 "to cast them in the fire,  
 "And as when *Daniel* was thrown,  
 "into the Lyons den,

“They spared him; but flesh and bone  
“all tore those wicked men.  
“So when three Kingdomes with a blast,  
“from Babels flaming pit;  
“Were like to come to woful waste,  
“before they dream’d of it:  
“The Son of God (that in the mids  
“of burning bush is dwelling)  
“Sav’d us, and kept his tender kids  
“from claws of Lions yelling.  
“Nay, (as if this unto his Grace,  
“had seem’d too small a thing)  
“He brought our foes into the place,  
“where they vow’d us to bring.  
Alas! if they had brought to pass,  
the things they took in hand,  
For Christ, the Pope, for Gospel Mass  
had reigned in our Land.  
And every where ther had been rife,  
Racks, halters, fire and stake,  
Or privy dungeon deaths, by knife,  
hunger, and poyson’d cake.  
But God was pleas’d from bitter brunts,  
of Antichristian thrall,  
To save us, and to just accounts  
those bloody men to call.  
Never since world began was thought  
Plot more abominable.  
Never Deliverance was wrought,  
more strange and admirable  
Our King was wise by a word to see  
their secret deep intent,  
Wiser to seal that firm decree  
in Court of Parliament,

That year by year, most solemn thanks  
 might to our God redound,  
 Who did the Popish power and pranks  
 so mightily confound.  
 Here to insert, is not amiss,  
 another later doom,  
 Which did befall long after this  
 some Romists in a room,  
 Even for this end, that all the Land  
 more freshly might remember,  
 How God abhorr'd *that Plot* in hand,  
 on fifth day of *November*.  
 "For he is privy to the rotten  
 "frame of our thankless minds,  
 "And sees how all would be forgotten  
 "without some fresher signs;  
 May't please you but to reckon by  
*Gregorian* Kalendar,  
 Then will you say as much as I,  
 am here to Register.

317

321

I 6 2 3.

IN the one thousand year of grace,  
 six hundred twenty three,  
 (Upon *Novembers* fifth it was)  
 some Papists did agree,  
 To meet upon a Garret-flowre  
 within *Black-friers* range,  
 Near which, the French Ambassadour  
 lodg'd, till this heavy change.  
 Two or three hundred thither flockt,  
 crowding with eager lust,

5

9

The room was full (the dore unlockt)  
     some to the stairs was thrust.  
 Who so repair unto the yard,  
     or garden where they went,  
 Of this sad doom and vesper-hard,  
     may see the monument.  
 For 't was at Even-song that they met,  
     upon the Lords own day,  
 Which by his Ordinance is set,  
     to teach us in his way.  
 They came to hear *Drury* a Priest,  
     from *Babel* thither sent, 22  
 Who in his Jesuit parrel drest,  
     did there his matter vent.  
 Before his Sermon, on his knees 25  
     at this chair feet he fell,  
 Which was rear'd up by some degrees,  
     that they might see him well.  
 There did he some short prayer mutter 29  
     as 't were an *Ave-mary*,  
 No vocal prayer did he utter,  
     (from us, perhaps to vary:)  
 But presently fell to his Text,  
     which was about the King;  
 Who pardon'd much to him, that vex[t]  
     his mate for a small thing.  
 Out of which Text he wringed this,  
     as some (that heard him) say; 38  
 'Twould goe with all such Souls amiss,  
     as from their fold do stray. •  
 Because forsooth their Sacraments,  
     (as namely Penance doing)  
 To cancel, are the Instruments  
     what debts to God are owing.

He preached by an hour-glass, 45  
 (an Embleme very apt,  
 To shew how near the period was,  
 how life dy death intrapt.) 48  
 Before the sand had run its course,  
 his breath was to be gone,  
 He made some way to his discourse,  
 but went no farther on,  
 The hand of God with sudden rush,  
 upon the Chamber came,  
 And did the Jesuit all to crush,  
 I'th' ruins of the same.  
 His Soul before that heav'nly King,  
 did answer for this action,  
 There learning best, what is the thing,  
 that yields him satisfaction.  
 This sure I am, unless he did  
 sole Christ his pleader make,  
 And Popish merits farewel bid,  
 he could not chuse but quake  
 With him well nigh an hundred more, 65  
 men, women, one and other,  
 By fall of beams, and upper flore,  
 were crushed in the smother.  
 So much o' th' Garret-flore fell, 69  
 as was above the place.  
 Where Father *Rediate* had his Cell  
 and Papists went to Mass.  
 But all their massing would not serve  
 their Priest, or them at all;  
 "They that from Scripture Cannon swerve,  
 "must look at last to fall.  
 Alas! what shrieks follow'd their mirth,  
 what cryes most pittiful?

Like theirs, whom once the gaping Earth, 79  
    into her womb did pull:  
Or like the doleful noise of all  
    that worshipt *Dagons* block; 82  
On whom the house did rush and fall,  
    whiles they did *Sampson* mock;  
Or like that dismal cry and groane,  
    throughout the Egyptian coasts,  
When, in one night each first born son,  
    was slain by th' Lord of Hoasts;  
Or like the Galilean moane,  
    when in sedition found,  
The sacrificers saw their own  
    blood spilt upon the ground.  
This sad disaster might enforce  
    a stony heart to melt,  
Which they in superstitious course  
    strongly beguiled, felt.  
"Secrets belong unto the Lord, 97  
    "this we may well proclaim,  
"What lies be damned in his word,  
    "his works confute the same.  
They went about to blaze abroad, 101  
    as if most cruelly,  
Some of the Protestants by fraud,  
    had wrought their misery.  
By secret drawing out of pin,  
    or sawing half asunder  
Some of the Timber, that was in  
    the house to prop it under.  
But this's a vaile that Satan cast  
    before their eyes to blind them,  
Thereby from sight of Judgement past,  
    and due remorse to wind them.



For plain it was, in strictest view, 113  
     that by the peoples press  
 And Sommeyrs mortazing undue,  
     they came to this distress,  
 And that Gods finger may appear,  
     more plainly, no foundation  
 Nor Wall did faile, but all entire 119  
     the seeld Roof kept his station.  
 "Oh then, that those which did escape,  
     "with feet out of the snare,  
 "Might learn no more to run or gape,  
     "after such Romish ware!  
 "And that we all might learn to flee  
     "from Babel and her dung,  
 "Lest for our filthiness we be,  
     "into her sorrows flung.  
 But to return whence I digrest, 129  
     (take the old stile or new,) 130  
*Novembers fifth* must be confest,  
     worthy all lasting view.  
 A day that justly was assign'd  
     to the Almightyes glory,  
 A day when all should call to mind,  
     the famous powder story:  
 But this not all to God belongs,  
     nor do we praise him best,  
 By Sermons, Prayers, or loud Songs,  
     Bells, Bone fires, or by Feast. 140  
 All these are good, but somewhat else  
     is of far better note;  
 When heart, and life, our Souls and selves,  
     to him are all devote.  
 God looked for 't that all Estates  
     should mend what was amiss,

That Truth and Judgement in our Gates, 147  
    should one another kiss.  
But we, alas! did soon forget  
    the mighty works of God,  
Not growing better any whit  
    by shaking of the rod,  
Nor by the wrack beyond the Sea  
    of Christian brotherhood;  
Nor Banners that our foes display,  
    'gainst Brittain's royal blood;  
Nor by the safe return again,  
    of our then royal-Prince,  
From his great venture into *Spain*,  
    nor his deliv'rance since,  
(When he was safe in falling down  
    by guard of Angels tended); 162  
Nor his safe coming to the Crown,  
    rightly on him descended:  
These works of God could not suffice  
    to draw us from our sinning,  
But still we kept the hue and size, 167  
    we had at the beginning:  
This stirred up the Lord of Hoasts,  
    to jealousy and rage,  
And made him smite again our Coasts,  
    not sparing any Age.

I 6 2 5.

**I**N the one thousand year of God,  
 six hundred twenty five,  
 Was sent the Pestilential rod,  
 our rocky hearts to rive.  
 In the chief City of the Realm,  
 it had the chieftest seat:  
 There like a Sea to overwhelm  
 pride that was grown so great;  
 Or like a fire to purge away,  
 the dross of hateful sin;  
 Or like a Trumpet thence to fray,  
 the sleep that Souls were in.  
 The Queen of Cityes wont to sit,  
 in Chair of highest state,  
 Now sate in dust and lowest pit, 15  
 all sad and desolate:  
 The highest Court of Parliament,  
 to *Oxford* did remove.  
 The Tearmers were to *Redding* sent, 19  
 their Titles there to prove.  
 Nor were the strangers strange alone,  
 to the infected City;  
 But her best lovers all were gone,  
 and left her without pitty.  
 I mean, the rich did flock away,  
 and bade her streets adieu,  
 Except the poor (which needs must stay)  
 there stayed but a few.  
 Nothing was heard but passing-bells,  
 and friends their friends lamenting,  
 Nothing but heavy doleful-knells.  
 (Death not at all relenting)

Nothing was seen but heaps of dead,  
 to feed the hungry grave;  
 Or others lying sick a bed,  
 (no way their life to save.)  
 Some looked pale, and some with pain,  
 were forc't to rave and roare,  
 Some did the deadly marks sustain,  
 and some the deadly sore:  
 In one years space, or less then so,  
 (from time the Plague began)  
 To what a number did they grow,  
 that death grip't in his span?  
 Sixty two thousand at the least,  
 Six hundred seventy seven,  
 Were made appear by deaths arrest,  
 before the God of Heaven.  
 Yea, do but from *Junes* second look  
 unto *Decembers* last,  
 Scarce shall you read in English-book  
 of like doom ever past.  
 Within this three months space alone,  
 as hath been duly counted,  
 Fifty three thousand ninety one,  
 by Bills report amounted.  
 In *London* and the Liberties,  
 (Six moe near Parishes add.)  
 All the forenamed clos'd their eyes,  
 and made their friends full sad.  
 More dy'd in *this* then *former* pest,  
 by th, heavy hand of God;  
 In thirteen weeks (to say the least)  
 Eleven thousand forty and odd.  
 Of all which summs, the greatest part  
 by death departed thence,

Were pierced through with fiery dart,  
of raging Pestilence.  
If within and without one City Walls,  
were found of men such lack,  
More then six myriades of Souls  
brought to so heavy wrack:  
Oh then what was the wrack and spoyl  
of all the Land beside,  
In Cities and in Country soyle,  
throughout the Kingdome wide?  
Trading grew dead, and mony scant,  
the rich doubting their state,  
The poor were pinched sore with want,  
all fear'd the dismal fate.  
Men from their dwellings fled apace  
where these night Arrows fell,  
But picked Halberds in each place  
were set them to repell.  
The high wayes unfrequented were,  
men feared all they met,  
And many keeping home, were there  
caught in this spreading net.  
High time it was that when the Lord,  
was thus to fury bent,  
All of their sins, so much abhorr'd,  
should speedily repent.  
Our Royal King right humbly fell  
before the King of Grace,  
In mournful weeds, becoming well,  
this sad and heavy case.  
It pittied him to see his sheep,  
by flocks to fall away,  
It made his very Soul to weep,  
to see their quick decay,

Himself began, and then he made,  
his Subjects all to fast,  
By Proclamation he forbad,  
(so long as plague shall last)  
All other works, upon the day  
to fasting set apart,  
That all at once might weekly pray,  
to God with broken heart.  
Thus all at once pour'd out their groans,  
to God in this restraint;  
Filling both Heaven and Earth with moans,  
and cries of their complaint.  
And God which ever keeps his word,  
soon pittied our woes,  
Bidding the Angel sheath his Sword,  
and slack his murdering blows.  
When in one week of sickness wanne,  
five thousan' a hundred five,  
Dy'd in the City, then began  
the City to revive.  
(Yet after this in six weeks space,  
of Plague and Feavers sore,  
There dyed in the foresaid place,  
full seventeen thousand more.)  
But oh! behold Gods mighty power:  
to grave were carryed thence,  
In twelve weeks, after this no more,  
but one of Pestilence.  
Even when the Plague was spread at length,  
into the Cities heart,  
Then did abate the raging strength,  
and poyson of his dart.  
"Right so the Jewish Church of old,  
"For *David's* proud presumption,

“And for their own rebellions bold,  
“fall’n in a quick consumption,  
“Just when the Angel stretcht his hand,  
“*Jerusalem* to stroy,  
“It pleased God no more their Land,  
“with sickness to annoy.

Yea mark; when those return’d again  
that from the City fled,  
And when the Country thick came in  
to market, boord, and bed,  
Who would have thought but by and by  
the Plague should be renewed?  
Yet did it still most quiet lye,  
as in a corner mewed.

Never was heard of such a change;  
’t was but few dayes before,  
The sickness up and down did range,  
scarce passing by a dore.  
The very ayre it self might then  
seem to be quite infected;  
Now Churches, Streets, shops, houses, men,  
all sure and safe protected.  
The eyes which had not before seen,  
the Cityes desolation,  
Could scarce believe that there had been  
such deadly visitation.

Six moneths are gone about at least,  
since that great ebbe and fall;  
Few all this while dy’d of the Pest,  
and some weeks none at all.  
Nor was the sickness driven out  
alone from *London City*,  
But in all Countries round about,  
was shewed the like pittie.



For though some sparkles here and there,  
to awe us yet remain,  
Yet little breaks out any where,  
to burn us up again.  
Even in our Town (so far remote) 173  
when this dismal disease,  
On place, and house, and man of note,  
most dangerously did seaze:  
When Town and Country were afraid,  
it would have further spred,  
This deadly plague with dead was laid,  
as in a resting bed,  
(And there it should have rested still,  
as many weeks it did,  
If men had not their doings-ill  
with false pretences hid.)  
As for this Parish (thanks to God,  
by whom the lot is cast)  
To this day felt this heavy rod,  
not one from first to last.  
Cry of our sins and grace abus'd, 189  
did well deserve the worst,  
But God to hear that cry refus'd,  
(else had we been the first:;)]  
Now what may be the Lords intent,  
it is not hard to gness,  
Even this, that we might all repent,  
and his free grace confess.

CONFESS we all, before the Lord,  
his grace and mercy then,  
And shew his Acts with one accord,  
before the sons of men:  
In presence of his holy ones,  
praise him with joy and fear,  
Who doth revive our withered bones,  
and light from darkness rear.  
Man, Woman, child, both old and yongue,  
rich, poor, the low and high,  
Laud and extol with heart and tongue,  
the highest Majesty.  
Ye blessed Angels honour him,  
and all the heavenly band,  
Ye birds that flye, and fish that swim,  
and cattel of the Land,  
Let every City, Shire, and Town,  
Each Church, and house, and Soul,  
With thankful pen write his renowne  
in everlasting roule.  
Let all that lives confess his grace,  
that saves their life and fame.  
Let none by wicked life deface,  
the glory of his name.  
And thou my Soul remember well,  
the kindness of the Lord,  
Cease not with thankful lips to tell,  
the trueness of his word;  
Who gave thee pardon of thy sin,  
and kept thee from the smart,  
(For all the danger thou wert in)  
of the infectious dart.

THOU Lord which from the Spanish yoke,  
and from the powder blast,  
And from that former sickness stroak,  
and from this newly past,  
Hast saved us, and ours, and thine,  
so many as survive,  
Oh do not of thy Grace divine  
our feeble Souls deprive.  
For we alas, are like to fall  
into the same excess,  
If to thy works thy grace withal,  
come not to work redress,  
So are we wedded to the toys,  
of our own hearts devising.  
That we neglect the heav'nly joyes,  
from thy pure wayes arising.  
(Even when the scourge was on our back,  
how few their life amended?  
Our mending then must needs be slack,  
when once the Plague is ended.)  
Nor Navy, nor the powder Plot,  
nor frightful noise of war,  
Nor roaring of the Cannon shot.  
nor all the Plagues that are,  
Shall ought prevail, nor yet our strange  
Deliverance from all,  
Unless thy holy Spirit change,  
and draw our hearts withal:  
Then draw us Lord immediately,  
and we shall follow thee,  
And make us such effectually  
as thou wouldst have us be:

So need we not to fear the Turke,  
Nor Pope, nor Spaine, nor Hell  
For thou shalt every evil work,  
Reveal, defeat, and quell.  
No sickness pestilential  
Shall smite our Tabernacle;  
Or if there do, thy mercy shall  
Be our safe Receptacle.  
Lord save thy Church, our King and State,  
Lord purge out all our dross,  
And such as do thy Gospel hate,  
Infatuate and cross  
Lord bless the Parliamantal Court,  
(Vpper and lower House,)  
And when to Counsel they resort,  
In them remember us.  
From King that sits upon the Throne,  
To beggar in the Street:  
Let all their by-past sins bemoane  
Before thy mercy feet;  
That we and our Posterity,  
Safe-hid under thy wing,  
May ever of thy verity  
And saving mercy sing.

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F I N I S.

DEO BISULTORI SAXUM. Ad memoriam  
Classis Hispanicæ, Anno, 1 5 8 8.

*Submersa, subversa.*

**V**Idimus (heu trepidi cum vidimus,) æquora Ibera  
Classe legi: centum, & senas quater illa vehebat.  
Non Vincenda rates Veteres ingentia nautæ  
Obstupuere ratum nova corpora: Viderat illas,  
Estq; suas miratus opes Neptunus, & in se  
Advenisse omnes ridet Telluris honores.  
Nos vero horruimus totilot tympana crebræ  
Clamoremq; tubæ, strictos super omnia cultros,  
Flagorumq; minas, quæ barbarus omnia Ibero  
Gentis in Exitium quæsiverat arma Britannæ.  
Nos lacerae viduæq; rati spes credimus. Illa  
Sulphure & igne gravis, ventis (spoliata Magistro)  
Tradiur, & votis exit crudelibus; Hosti  
Mista suis pereat flammis, sed perdit & hostem.  
Ventis' vecta suis perit hæc [hæc], sed perdit & hostem,  
Vidimu s hic læti velis albentia primi  
Æquora, nunc sanie & nigro maculata cruore,  
Excuitur cursu Classis, pars æquore mersa est,  
In mediis pars ardet aquis, pars flumine cæco  
Errat, & ignotis vix tandem allabitur oris.

Ad memoriam proditiōis Pulverariæ Anno,  
1605. *Indicatæ Vindicatæ,*

**V**Idimus (o læti, cum vidimus) eruta cæco  
 Roma tui sceleris quanta, quot arma specu!  
 Ferrum, saxa, faces, & dolia sulphure fæta,  
 (Scilicet his Meretrix vina dat hausta cadis.)  
 Haec latuere diu magni sub fornice Tecti,  
 Jussa manere manum, Fauxe sceleste, tuam.  
 Legibus illa olim penetralia sacra ferendis  
 Proh pudor!) horrendum pene tulere scelus:  
 Rex, Princeps, Proceres, Patres, flos Plebis ut uno  
 Ictu corruerent, ipsaq; Relligio.  
 Admatura sacras aderat manus ultima flammæ,  
 Prodit, disperdit, vindicat ista Deus.  
 Nil Erebum pudeat scelerum: Scelus hoc dabit unum  
 Infandosq; homines, Euminidasq; pias.  
 En Erebo accessit sceleris nova forma, paremq;  
 Huic Erebum sceleri postulat illa novum.  
 Par sceleri dabitur pretium? Modus unus utrique,  
 Nullus erit pene: nullus erat sceleri.  
 Par merito laus danda Deo? Modus unus rtriq; 19  
 Nullus erit laudi; nullus erat merito.  
 Rite Deo Saxumq; datum, nomenq; Bis-ultor:  
 Vicerat hinc hostes, luserat inde dolos,  
 Perditione prius, nunc proditiōe petebant:  
 Perdita perditio est, prodita proditiō.

*To God our twice-Revenger.*

WE saw, but oh! how sad were we to see,  
Spains (prouder) Fleet on the proud Ocean  
spred

An hundred ships there were, & eight times three  
Which made it deem'd and nam'd unconquered.

The antient Pilots were amaz'd to see't,

When they beheld this new-huge bodied Fleet.

The Sea with mazed smile saw in her bounds,  
All the Earths wealth and honor brought by Ships,  
But we all trembled at the frequent sounds

Of Trumpets, Drummes: at naked Swords and  
Whips,

(Sore threatned) wherewith all the Spaniard fell,

Came arm'd this Brittain Nation to quell.

Our hopes are in alone-torne Ship (befitted, 13

With fire and Brimstone as her chieftest load)

She, without guide, is to the winds committed,

And forth with cruel destiny she roade;

[Them and her self with her own flames to  
spoyle] 17

Winds serve; she burnt her self, put them to foile. 18

Here were we cheer,d to see the Ocean maine,

All white before with Sails, now purple grown.

As suddenly with blood of Spaniards slain:

Their Fleet is scattred, and their Ships o're thrown:

Some sink, some burn i th' Sea, and some at last,

After long wandring, on strange Shores are cast.



WE saw, but oh! how glad were we to see,  
 O cruel Rome, out of thy darksome den,  
 So many weapons of thy villany  
 And mighty Engines, pluckt by hands of men?  
 Stones, Faggots, Crows, Gun-powder tubs we saw,  
 These wines *The Whore* doth from her vessels  
 draw.

Long were they hid under the secret Vault,  
 Of that great house; and there they were to lye,  
 Till they were made (O horrible assault!)  
 By wicked *Faux* his hand, aloft to flye.

Those sacred rooms where Laws were wont to  
 breed,  
 To sudden wrack and ruine were decreed.  
 King Prince, Peers, Prelates, Commons, Gospel  
 bright,

All at one blow together were to fall:  
 Match was in hand to give the Trains their light,  
 But God reveal'd, destroy'd, reveng'd them all.

Hell needs not blush: for this Impiety  
 Doth worst of men, fiends furies justifie.

Hell never knew such wickedness as this,  
 Another Hell (like it) there need a'-been.

Should Plot and pay be like? for both there is 45  
 One measure: none of pay! for, none of sin.

Should praise be like Gods grace? there is but one  
 Measure for both: Grace had, praise must have  
 none.

*A Pillar Consecrated.*

**T**His Pillar bright, and [twice-Revenger's]  
name,

Both to our God of right we are to reare;  
For he hath more then twice deserv'd the same,  
Here, having quell'd our Foes, and mockt 'em there.

**T**Hey first destroyers, and then Traytors playd;  
Destroyers are destroy'd, Traytors betray'd.

Verses made by *Theodore Beza*, upon the overthrow of the *Spanish Navy*, 1 5 8 8.

**S***Traverat innumeris Hispanus classibus Æquor,  
Regnis juncturus Sceptra Britanna suis.*

*Tanti hujus rogitas quæ motus causa? superbos*

*Impulit Ambitio, vexit Avaritia.*

*Quam bene te, Ambitio, mersit vanissima, Ventus?*

*Et tumidæ tumidos vos superastis aquæ?*

*Quam bene Raptores orbis totius Iberos,*

*Mersit inexhausti justa vorago maris?*

*Et tu cui venti, cui totum militat Æquor,*

*Regina, O mundi totius una decus,*

*Sic Regnare Deo perge, Ambitione remota,*

*prodiga sic opibus perge juvare pios:*

*Ut te Angli longum, longum Anglis ipsa fruaris,*

*Quam dilecta bonis, tam metuenda malis.*

*Thus Englished (though not according to their worth.)*

**T**He Spaniard with great Ships, and numberless,  
 Ore-spread the Sea, that with his Kingdoms  
     large  
 He might great Brittain's royal Crown possess,  
 Wouldst know the cause of all this stir and charge?  
     'T was this: The proud were with Ambition led,  
     And after filthy lucre carryed.  
 How well wert thou [most vain Ambition]  
 Drown'd by the wind? and ye O swelling waves,  
 Ore-came that proud and swelling Dition,                     9  
 World-spyling Spaniards, midst of all their braves,  
     How well and justly in the gulfe profound,  
     Were, of the Sea unsatiable, drown'd?  
 And thou, for whom the winds and Ocean maine,  
 Are prest to fight, O Queen (the worlds renown)  
 So still for God, without Ambition reign,  
 So still the godly with rich favours crown.  
     That England thee, thou England, long and long  
     May'njoy; the good belov'd, bad fear'd, among.

*Another Song.*

**O** Night, O day, while dayes and nights shall last,  
     'Bove all the dayes and nights that ever past,  
 To Englands God be hallowed,  
 With hearts and tongues solemnized,  
 With Hymns and songs eternized.  
 Black night and direful day, thou shouldst have  
     been,

A thundring night, a stormy day I ween,  
With hellish Tempests darkned,  
With Romish murders bloodyed,  
With English horror dismayed.  
The Train was ready laid, the powder dry,  
*Faulks*, and the blow, I quake to think how nigh.  
Now all the Fiends of Hell wide gap'd.  
Now all the friends of *Rome* well hop'd,  
Now all *England* securely slep'd.  
But Gods all-seeing never slumbring eye,  
As Sentinel kept watch and ward on high,  
Their devillish Plots he fore-espies,  
Their Popish Miners he discryes,  
Gives King and State deliveries.  
Thus Hell and Rome have England twice assay'd,  
With force and fraud t' have conquer'd and betray'd;  
Their Navy first God scattered,  
Their Treason next discovered,  
And twice hath us delivered.  
'Mongst years let eighty eight be Chronicled,  
'Mongst dayes, *Novembers fifth* be Calendred,  
To God let both be hallowed,  
With hearts and tongues solemnized,  
With himns and songs eternized.  
For all, of all, God praised be,  
With hearts, tongues, lives, be honour'd he,  
Amen, Amen, Amen say we.

F I N I S.



OTHER POEMS BY  
JOHN WILSON





From Cotton Mather's *Magnalia*, 1702

---

In Pientissimum, Reverendissimumq; Virum,  
*JOHANNEM HARVARDUM*,  
è suggesto Sacro *Caroloensi* ad Cœlos Evectum,  
Ad Alumnos *Cantabrienses* Literatos, Poëma.

---

*Johannes Harvardus.*

Anagr.

Si non (ah!) surdâ Aure.

En, mihi fert Animus, Patroni Nomine Vestri  
(*Si non (ah!) surdâ spernitur Aure*) loqui.

Sic ait.

Me Deus, immenso per Christum Motus amore,  
Ad Cœlos servum jussit abire suum.  
Parebam; monituq; Dei præeunte parabam  
Quicquid ad Optatum sufficebat Opus.  
Me (Licet Indignum) Selegit Gratia Christi,  
Fundarem Musis, qui pia Tecta pijs.  
(Non quòd vel Charâ, moriens Uxore carerem,  
Aut Hæres alius quòd mihi nullus erat:)  
Hæredes vos ipse meos, sed linquere suasit,  
Usq; ad Dimidium sortis opumq;, Deus.  
Me commune Bonum, præsertim Gloria Christi,  
Impulit et charæ Posteritatis Amor:  
Sat ratus esse mihi Sobolis, Pietatis Amore  
Educat Illustres si Schola nostra Viros.  
Hæc mihi Spes (Vitâ Morienti dulcior olim)  
Me recreat, Cœli dum Requiete fruor.

At si degeneres liqueat vos esse (quod absit!)  
Otia si Studiis sint potiora bonis:  
Si nec Doctrinâ, nec Moribus estis Honestis  
Imbuti, (Fastu non levioꝛe tamen.  
Grata sit aut Vobis, si secta vel Hæresis ulla,  
Vos simul inficiens, Vos, Dominiq; gregem:  
Hæc mihi Patrono quàm sunt contraria vestro!  
Atq; magis summo Displicitura Deo!  
Nec tamen ista meo sic Nomine dicier opto,  
Mens quasi promittat non melioꝛa mihi!  
Gaudia Cœlorum vix me satiare valerent,  
Si tanta Orbatus, Speq, Fideq; forem.  
Ille Deus Vobis, Vestrisq; Laboribus, almam,  
Et dedit, et porrò suppeditabit opem.  
Ejus in Obsequio, sic, O! sic, pergite cuncti,  
Ut fluat hinc major Gloria Lausq; Deo.  
At si quis recto malè sit de Tramite gressus  
(Quod *David*, et *Solomon*? et *Petrus* ipse queat.)  
Hic sibi nè placeat, Monitus neq; ferre recuset,  
In rectam possint qui revocare viam.  
Sic Grati Vos este Deo! Vestriq; Labores  
Quos olim in Christo suscipietis erunt.  
Utq; *Vetus* meruit sibi *Cantabrigia* Nomen,  
Sic Nomen fiet dulce Feraxq; *Novæ*.

*Johannes Wilsonus.*

A FRAGMENT OF A POEM ON THE  
DEATH OF SAMUEL DANFORTH,  
AN INFANT,

1653

From Cotton Mather's *Magnalia*, 1702:

“Upon the Death of the first and only  
Child (being an Infant) of his Daughter  
Mrs. *Danforth*,” John Wilson “made a  
Poem, wherein were these Lines among the  
rest,”

What if they part with their beloved one,  
Their *first Begotten*, and their *Only Son*?<sup>2</sup>  
What's this to that which Father *Abram* Suffer'd,  
When his own hands his *Only Darling* offer'd,  
In whom was bound up all his Joy in this  
Life present, and his hope of future Bliss?  
And what if God their *Other Children* Call,  
*Second, Third, Fourth*, suppose it should be All?  
What's this to Holy *Job*, his Trials sad,  
Who neither *these* nor *t'other* Comforts had?  
His *Life* was only given him for a Prey,  
Yet all his Troubles were to *Heaven* the way;  
Yea to far *Greater Blessings* on the Earth,  
The Lord rewarding all his *Tears* with *Mirth*.

# WILSON'S VERSES ON JOSEPH BRISCO

(Printed as a broadside, probably soon after Brisco's death. The Massachusetts Historical Society owns a copy, and there is a facsimile reproduction in S. A. Green's *Ten Fac-simile Reproductions Relating to New England*, Boston, 1902.)

## A COPY OF VERSES

*Made by that Reverend Man of God Mr. John  
Wilson, Pastor to the first Church in Boston;  
On the sudden Death of*

*Mr. Joseph Brisco,*

*Who was translated from Earth to Heaven  
Jan .1. 1657.*

*Not by a Fiery Chariot as Elisha was,  
But by the Water, which was the outward cause:  
And now at Rest with Christ his Saviour dear,  
Though he hath left his dear Relations here.*

*Joseph Briscoe    }  
Job cries hopes.    } Anagram.*

There is no *Job* but cries to God and hopes,  
And God his ear in Christ; to cries he opes,  
Out of the deeps to him I cry'd and hop'd,  
And unto me his gracious ear is op'd:  
Doubt not of this ye that my death bewail,  
What if it did so strangely me assail:  
What if I was so soon in Waters drown'd,  
And when I cry'd to men, no help I found:  
There was a God in Heaven that heard my cry,

And lookt upon me with a gracious eye:  
He that did pity *Joseph* in his grief,  
Sent from above unto my soul relief:  
He sent his Angels who did it conveigh  
Into his Bosom, where poor *Laz'rus* lay:  
Let none presume to censure my estate,  
As *Job* his Friends did stumble at his Fate.  
All things on Earth do fall alike to all,  
To good Disciples, which on God that call;  
To those that do Blaspheme his Holy Name,  
And unto those that reverence the same:  
He that from nature drew me unto Grace,  
And look'd upon me with a Fathers face:  
When in my blood upheld me to the last,  
And now I do of joyes eternal tast.  
Remember how *Job's* precious children Dy'd,  
As also what the Prophet *did* betide: *Jonah*  
What was the end of good *Josiah's* life,  
And how it fared with *Ezekiels* Wife:  
Remember what a Death it was that Christ  
(Suffered for me) the Darling of the highest;  
His Death of Deaths hath quite remov'd the sting,  
No matter how or where the Lord doth bring  
Us to our end, in Christ who live and die  
And sure to live with Christ eternally.

From "The Church-Membership of Children,  
*And Their Right To Baptisme, . . .* By  
*Thomas Shepard*, somtimes Pastor of the  
 Church of Christ at *Cambridg* in *New-Eng-*  
*land . . . Cambridg . . . 1663."*

(A copy of this book is in the Harvard College Library.)

# I. THOMAS SHEPARDIUS

*Anagr: Paradisus hostem?*

*Heu! Paradisus alit Sanctis infantibus hostem?*

*Quos Baptizari præcipit ipse Deus?*

*Quos Deus ambabus, clemens, amplexitur ulnis,*

*Non sinet in gremio Tingier Ille suo?*

*Annon pro Sanctis Ecclesia (mater) habebit,*

*Quos sancti Sanctos vox ait esse Dei?*

*Hoc Deus avertat. Non sic Shepardius olim,*

*Non sic, quæ moriens Scripta reliquit, aiunt.*

*Non sic Doctores celebrat quos sanctior atas,*

*Anglia quos celebrat Prisca, simulque nova.*

*His utinam Sanctis Deus ipse laboribus almam*

*E superis, clemens, suppeditaret opem!*

*Quâ sine, Doctores non ulli, scripta nec ulla,*

*Erroribus possunt carnificare malos.*

*Ius confirmabas puerorum, Christe, tuorum*

*A gremio vellent cum revocare tuo;*

*Surgito, Lactentesque tuos defendito ab hoste*

*Qui vellet laudes (— cunque) perire tuas.*

*Amen Johannes Wilsonus senior.*

II. THOMAS SHEPARD. *Anagr:*

ô a map's thresh'd.

Loe her's *a map*, where we may see  
Well *thresh'd* an heap of corn to be  
By *Thomas Shepard's* happy hand  
Which from the chaffe pure wheat hath fan'd:  
The wheat is the Church-members right  
(Both great and little ones) to witt  
Unto the seal of Baptisme, all  
That are within the Gospel call;  
I mean Believers and their seed;  
To whom the Lord hath Promised,  
To be *their God*; and doth reveal  
Their right to's Covenant and the seal:  
On whom through Grace *the Blessing* came  
Of his dear servant *Abraham*.  
Be they or *Jewes* or *Gentiles*, now  
No difference the Lord doth know.  
The promise is to us and ours,  
As large, or larger: and God pour's  
His Spirit now as much, or more  
Then e're he did on them before.  
And if that they were *Circumcis'd*  
Then we are now to be *Baptiz'd*:  
Our Babes must now no less then theirs  
Be seal'd (as of his Kingdome heires)  
Christ calleth them his little ones,  
And as his darlings He them owne's  
Denouncing against them a woe,  
That are despisers of them, who  
Offend the least of them, and such  
As do their interest in him grutch.



*Crispus*, with *Gaius*, *Stephanas*,  
 With others, were not all through Grace  
 Baptis'd that of their Household were?  
 And Children who will doubt were there?  
 Then let us not to them deny,  
 Nor seem as if we did envy  
 The priviledge which God from heaven  
 Hath through his grace and favour given.  
 Nor let us limit his good Spirit  
 In applycation of Christ's merit:  
 Whose blood was shed for them, as well  
 As those who them in age excell:  
 If such be taught of God, who dare  
 Deny, they his *Disciples* are?

### III. *THOMAS SHEPARD*

Anagr:

*More hath pass'd*

*More* from this holy pen *hath pass'd*  
 The Baptisme to defend  
 Of Infants that Church members are  
 (If well you do attend)  
 Then any *Anti-baptists* can  
 with solidness confute.  
 I wish with all my heart that God  
 will grant these labours fruit,  
 As good or better then the paines  
 by other Godly taken.  
 That thereby all his precious Saints  
 he would please to awaken.  
 That none may any more oppose,  
 with Zeal preposterous,

The Truth which Gods most holy word  
commendeth unto us:  
That who were less convinced by  
this holy *Shepard's* voice,  
Yet in his *Letter* left behind  
they may the more rejoyce.  
He was a *shining Light* indeed,  
few other such are left,  
The Lord vouchsafe we be not by  
our Sinns of them bereft.  
And poure down of his Spirit more  
upon his Sons surviving;  
That will be more and more unto  
Truth's lovers a reviving.

## IIII. THOMAS SHEPARD

Anagr:

*Arm'd as the Shop.*

*Arm'd* (as the shop of God's good word  
Doth weapons unto him afford)  
Defend's the right of *little ones*,  
Whom God in the Church-Covenant ownes  
The Children of his Church among,  
To whom *his Kingdome* doth belong,  
And therewithall the *Seal* thereof,  
Through his free Mercy, Grace, and Love.  
Yet are there some which them forbid  
(As once his weak *Disciples* did)  
To come to Christ, and scruple make,  
Whether thereof they should partake?  
But Christ was very angry for it,  
As for such Zeale he did abhor it;  
Oh come, said he, and welcom'd such,

With tokens of affection much:  
 As if that they and scarcely any  
 But such as they might chalenge any  
 Or part, or portion in his grace,  
 (So did his favour them embrace)  
 His Babes, his Lambs, his little creatures  
 He call's them. As for such defeatures,  
 Christ they defeat as well as them  
 Whom they presume so to contemn.  
 This holy *Shepard* is like *David*,  
 From Lyon's mouth and Beare's who saved  
 That *little Kid*; whom God did crown  
 With great and singular renown:  
 And so this *Shepard* hath (no doubt)  
 A glorious crown his head about.  
 For all his labours, (and for this;)  
 In high and everlasting bliss.  
 And as the Lord doth honour him  
 (For Christ his sake) so his esteem  
 Both is, and ought to be most rare,  
 'Mongst them who Christ his followers are:  
 And oh how should we bless his Name,  
 That on his *Son* he powr's the same  
 Good Spirit that was in the Father  
 Or doubles it upon him rather:  
 LORD these *Epistles* do thou bless!  
 And as thy Truth they do confess  
 So make them precious in the eyes  
 Of all that do thy Gospel prize.

Amen *JOHN WILSON* Senior

From "Three Choice and Profitable Sermons  
Upon Severall Texts of Scripture; . . . By  
that Reverend Servant of Christ, Mr John  
Norton *Late Teacher of the Church of Christ  
at Boston in N. E. . . . Cambridge . . . 1664.*"

(A copy of this book is in the Harvard College Library. After the title-page come two pages containing four anagrams on Norton, after the last of which Wilson's name appears.)

## JOHANNES NORTONUS

## ANAGR.

## NONNE IS HONORATUS?

*Nonne is Honoratus? Deus ipse coronat honore  
Servum, (cum perii) non pereunte, suum.  
Abstulit Enôchum translatio mira, sed ejus  
In Cælis decorat pulchra Corona Caput.  
Qui nobis, (subito raptus) miser esse videtur  
(Forsitan, Ignaris) vivit at usq; Deo.  
Vivit, & in Cælis cumulatus honoribus amplis  
Regnat in æternum (sic ait ipse Deus.)  
Mors inopina potest Jobi cito perdere Natos,  
Sors quibus in superis inviolata datur.  
Multa priùs passi Moses Aaronq; fuere,  
Tempus & ante suum jussus uterq; mori.  
Quid si non licuit Canaanem visere? Tanto  
Celsior in Cælis cessit utriq; locus.  
Curribus ignitis Elias raptus; at illis  
Ad summi vehitur culmina summa poli.  
Esto. Sit in Bello Josias victus, & ictus,  
Mortuus in pace est non pereunte tamen.*

*Funera non unquam Magè lamentanda Sioni,*  
*Josiæ nunquàm Gloria major erat.*  
*Quem deflent homines, Deus optimus auget honore*  
*His dolor, ast illi Gloria summa fuit.*  
*Si Caput amisit (gladio resecante) Iohannes,*  
*Ejus honor, (Christo judice) quantus erat!*  
*Sit Stephanus lapidum (licet) obrutus ictibus, Illum*  
*Christus in amplexus traxerat inde suos.*  
*Christus & ipse fuit quàm dirà morte peremptus*  
*At sequitur tantam Gloria quanta Crucem!*  
*Sic Deus ut Christum, sic Christus honore Coronat*  
*Eximio, quibus est Gloria chara Dei.*  
*Qualis erat noster (syncero corde) Iohannes*  
*Cui, nisi quæ Christi, chara fuere nihil.*  
*Hoc (scio) nemo negat, nisi veri Testis & æqui*  
*Non velit esse (Bonos Consule, sive malos.)*  
*Pro Samuele olim contestabantur & omneis*  
*(Hunc qui pro meritis vix coluere suis)*  
*Vel siquis forsan magis invidet Ejus honori,*  
*Hinc cumulus crescet major honoris ei.*

Anagr. 2.

JESU! ANNON THRONOS?

JOHANNES NORTONIUS.

Anagr. 3.

*ANNON JESU HONOR SIT?*

*ANnon dandus honor sit at omnibus omnis Jesu?  
Est quibus in Jesu sanguine parta salus?*

ENGLISH.

OH Iesu! hast not thou prepared Thrones  
For us thy poor and ill deserving ones?  
How should we then to Thee all Honour give,  
And to thy Name, who in the Heav'ns dost live,  
And there preparest Mansions for thine,  
Where they may all in endless Glory shine?

*To the same purpose.*

JOHN NORTON. *Anagr.*

*INTO HONNOR.*

From Honour into Honour go  
    (the Lord thus calling thee)  
To higher Honour, then there could  
    on Earth obtained bee.  
Heav'n is the Seat of Honour for  
    those whom he Crowns with Grace;  
For the most honourable Crowns,  
    Heav'n is the onely place.  
By men that are most ignorant  
    of Gods revealed Will,  
Thou may'st be miserable thought;  
    for so they construe still  
(Like brutish ones) the minde of God  
    if Saints die in a swoon,  
As if their Sun; all bright before,  
    Were now gone down at Noon.

As if their case were now by farre  
 the more to be deplor'd,  
 As that which doth but little hope  
 (or none) of Bliss afford.

Yea, holy *Job* his Friends to this  
 did too-too much incline,  
 [*That sudden Changes, such us his,*  
*do argue Wrath divine.*]

23

But when the Saints do perish thus  
 (as foolish men conceive)  
 That is the time, and means whereby  
 more Honour they receive,  
 As being Crown'd with Royal Crowns  
 which are at Gods right hand.

Like *Joseph* from his Dungeon  
 rais'd by the Kings Command.

'Twas a translation marvellous  
 which did *Enoch* remove

33

From out this sinful world, to be  
 crown'd in the Heav'ns above,  
 Where now he lives, & reigns, with heaps  
 of highest honour fill'd,

All his Predictions to be  
 from time to time fulfill'd.

An unexpected death did seize  
 on *Jobs* posteritie,

But in the Heav'ns a glorious Lot  
 for them prepar'd did lie.

*Moses* and *Aaron* when as they  
 had suffer'd much, were bid

As 't were, before their time to die  
 (as in their Mounts they did)

What if the Land of *Canaan*  
 they might not visit? yet



A place more glorious in the Heav'ns  
they, both of them, did get.  
In flaming-fiery-Charet wrapt  
from earth *Elijah* was,  
And by the same convey'd he was  
unto his bliss-ful place.  
Be it that good *Josiah* were  
cut off with suddain stroke,  
He dy'd in peace, and unto rest  
eternal was he toke.  
No funeral to Sion was  
as his so lamentable,  
Yet was his death as well as life  
to him most honourable.  
Theirs was the griefe, the joy was his.  
God highly honourd him,  
Although his death to carnal eyes  
might miserable seem.  
The cursed executioner  
cut off *John Baptist's* head,  
But how did Jesus honour him  
both when alive, and dead.  
The Crowned Martyr holy *Stephen*  
in cruel wise was ston'd,  
But by his blessed Saviour's  
most sweet imbraces own'd.  
Yea, Christ himself, Gods own dear Son,  
whose death more woeful was  
Yet from his cross how soon advanc'd  
to that most glorious place!  
So God his Christ with honour crown'd;  
So Christ doth honour his,  
To whom Gods Honour, and his Christ's,  
most dear and precious is.

And such an one our *Norton* was  
whose death we so lament,  
Whose whole desire was upon Christ  
and on his glory bent  
None can deny it good nor bad,  
like as to *Samuel*  
They all were forced to confess  
he had done all things well.  
If any one should have an heart  
with envy fill'd so much  
As unto him his honour due,  
malignantly to grutch  
Yet this will adde unto the weight  
of his most glorious Crown,  
And both in sight of God and men  
increase his high renown.  
Tis true: he was a man, and none  
himself abhorred more;  
But none did more the Lords free grace  
in Jesus Christ adore.  
Nothing but this, to know, or preach,  
or share in did he wish.  
This was on Earth, as 't is in Heav'n  
his blessed Paradise.  
To Honour Christ, he was content  
as well by Sea, as Land,  
His Life to venture, yea his ALL,  
was All at Christ's Command.  
The care of all His Churches-dear  
lay heavy on his heart,  
As he did ever, but at last,  
most fully it impart.  
His life was nothing but of death  
a daily meditation,

And to his happy end, at last,  
 a solemn preparation.  
 He was a man (if any were)  
 that loved truth, and peace,  
 Which to promote, in every kinde  
 he ne're at all did cease.  
 An Orthodox Divine he was  
 (his writings all do show,)  
 Both Englands, Holland, all the World,  
 or do or may it know.  
 His books do Antichrist confute  
 with all his viperous brood,  
 Especially where they eclipse  
 the merits of Christs blood.  
 Church-holy-order he maintain'd  
 against *Morellianisme*,  
 Decrying every sect, but most  
 abhorring *Quakerisme*.  
 His last both words, and works  
 (like Davids) were the best  
 And as his death more neer approach'd  
 more lively then the rest.  
 Nothing, but things at Gods right hand,  
 and heavenly Mansions  
 Was in his thoughts, at home, abroad,  
 breath'd in's expressions.  
 Ipswich was happy, Boston more,  
 (if it we had but known)  
 Whom two such *Johns* successively  
 God gave to be their own.  
 But *John* and *Paul*, so much admir'd  
 (and most deservedly)  
 Must be content to be abas'd  
 by some, before they dy:

134

147

And being dead, it will appeare  
such Prophets once we had,  
When God hath once abased us  
with changes very sad.  
The Lord, if his good pleasure be,  
our miseries prevent,  
And of our great unthankfulness  
grant that we may repent.  
Then will the Lord this Widow-Church,  
that widows house relieve,  
And make us all rejoyce again  
whom now he makes to grieve.  
We griev'd him first, and just it was  
that he should grieve our hearts,  
Though when at low'st we are, tis far  
beneath our just deserts.  
I speak of all New-England, but  
chiefly of Boston Church,  
Oh! let us all impartially  
our wayes and spirits search;  
And say as the Disciples did,  
Lord, is it I? is't I?  
And thou, my soule, beyond the rest  
It to thy self applie.  
Tis thou hast sinned: were there none,  
but thy unworthiness  
Well might the Lord both thee, and all,  
because of thee, distress.  
When such green trees, as were those *Johns*  
Gods hand thus spareth not,  
Of such a dry and withered one  
Lord what will be the lot?  
However we must bless thy name  
(what ere of us become)

That thou takes up such fruitful ones  
to thine eternal home.

Oh! that their rare Examples wee  
to follow had the grace!

That thou may'st count us worthy once  
of that most glorious place.

As for his *Mary*, let her say,

193

[*Rabboni*] unto him,

194

Who calls her [*Mary*] by her Name,  
and did her Soul redeem.

John Wilson *Sen.*



OTHER POEMS BY SAMUEL  
DANFORTH





From "*An Almanack for the Year of Our Lord*  
1647 . . . *By Samuel Danforth of Harvard*  
*Colledge Philomathemat.* Cambridge . . .  
1647."

(A copy of this Almanack is in the Henry E. Huntington Library,  
and a photostat of it is in the Harvard College Library among the  
Nichols Photostats of early Massachusetts Almanacs.)

[March]

A Coal-white Bird appeares this spring  
That neither cares to sigh or sing.  
This when the merry Birds espy,  
They take her for some enemy.  
Why so, when as she humbly stands  
Only to shake you by your hands?

[April]

That which hath neither tongue nor wings  
This month how merrily it sings:  
To see such, out for dead who lay  
To cast their winding sheets away?  
Freinds! would you live? some pils then take  
When head and stomach both doe ake.

[May]

White Coates! whom choose you! whom you list:  
Some Ana-tolleratorist:  
Wolves, lambs, hens, foxes to agree  
By setting all opinion-free:  
If Blew-coates doe not this prevent,  
Hobgoblins will be insolent.

## [June]

Who dig'd this spring of Gardens here,  
Whose mudded streames at last run cleare?  
But why should we such water drink?  
Give losers what they list to think,  
Yet know, one God, one Faith profest  
To be New-Englands interest.

## [July]

The wooden Birds are now in sight,  
Whose voices roare, whose wings are white,  
Whose mawes are fill'd with hose and shooes,  
With wine, cloth, sugar, salt and newes,  
When they have eas'd their stomacks here  
They cry, farewell untill next yeare.

## [August]

Many this month I doe fore-see  
Together by the eares will bee:  
Indian and English in the field  
To one another will not yeild.  
Some weeks continue wil this fray,  
Till they be carted all away.

## [September]

Four heads should meet and counsell have,  
The chickens from the kite to save,  
The idle drones away to drive,  
The little Bees to keep i'th hive.  
How hony m<sub>[a]</sub>y be brought to these  
By making fish to dance on trees.

## [October]

If discontented Bellyes shall  
Wish that the highest now might fall:  
Their wish fulfilled they shall see,  
Whenas within the woods they bee.  
Poor Tinker think'st our shrubs will sing:  
The Bramble here shall be our King.

## [November]

None of the wisest now will crave  
To know what winter we shall have.  
It shall be milde, let such be told.  
If that it be not over cold.  
Nor over cold shall they it see,  
If very temperate it bee

## [December]

It maybe now some enemy —  
Not seen, but felt, will make you fly.  
Where is it best then to abide:  
I think close by the fier side.  
If you must fight it out i'th field,  
Your hearts let woollen breast-plates shield.

## [January]

Great bridges shall be made alone  
Without ax, timber, earth or stone,  
Of chrystall metall, like to glasse;  
Such wondrous works soon come to passe,  
If you may then have such a way,  
The Ferry-man you need not pay.

[February]

Our Lillyes which refus'd to spin  
 All winter past, shall now begin  
 To feel the lash of such a Dame,  
 Whom some call Idlenes by name.  
 Excepting such who all this time  
 Had reason good against my rime.

From "*An Almanack for the Year of Our Lord  
 1648 . . . By Samuel Danforth of Harvard  
 Colledge Philomathemat. . . . Cambridge,  
 1648.*"

(A copy of this Almanack is in the Henry E. Huntington Library, and a photostat of it is in the Harvard College Library among the Nichols Photostats of early Massachusetts Almanacs. The poem was printed in the *American Quarterly Register*, viii, 136-37 (1836).

Awake yee western Nymphs, arise and sing:  
 And with fresh tunes salute your welcome spring,  
 Behold a choyce, a rare and pleasant plant, 3  
 Which nothing but it's parallell doth want.  
 T'was but a tender slip a while agoe,  
 About twice ten years or a little moe,  
 But now 'tis grown unto such comely state  
 That one would think't an Olive tree or Date.

A skilfull Husband-man he was, who brought 9  
 This matchles plant from far, & here hath sought  
 A place to set it in: & for it's sake,  
 The wildernes a pleasant land doth make,  
 And with a tender care it setts and dresses,  
 Digs round about it, waters, dungs & blesses,  
 And, that it may fruit forth in season bring,  
 Doth lop & cut & prune it every spring. 16

Bright Phoebus casts his silver sparkling ray,  
Upon this thriving plant both night & day.  
And with a pleasant aspect smiles upon  
The tender buds & blooms that hang thereon.  
The lofty skyes their chrystall drops bestow;  
Which cause the plant to flourish & to grow.  
The radiant Star is in it's Horoscope:  
And there't will raigne & rule for aye, we hope.

At this tree's roots Astræa sits and sings 25  
And waters it, whence upright JUSTICE springs,  
Which yearly shoots forth Lawes & Libertyes,  
That no mans Will or Wit may tyrannize.  
Those Birds of prey, who sometime have opprest  
And stain'd the Country with their filthy nest,  
Justice abhors; & one day hopes to finde  
A way to make all promise-breakers grinde. 32

On this tree's top hangs pleasant LIBERTY,  
Not seen in Austria, France, Spain, Italy.  
Some fling their swords at it, their caps some cast  
In Britain 't will not downe, it hangs so fast.  
A loosnes (true) it breeds (Galen ne'er saw)  
Alas! the reason is, men eat it raw.  
True Liberty's there ripe, where all confess  
They may do what they will, but wickednes.

PEACE is another fruit; which this tree bears,  
The cheifest garland that this Country wears,  
Which over all house-tops, townes, fields doth  
spread,  
And stuffes the pillow for each weary head.  
It bloom'd in Europe once, but now 't is gon:  
And's glad to finde a desert-mansion.

Thousands to buye it with their blood have sought  
But cannot finde it; we ha't here for nought.

In times of yore, (some say, it is no ly)  
There was a tree that brought forth UNITY.  
It grew a little while, a year or twain,  
But since 'twas nipt, 't hath scarce been seen again,  
Till some here sought it, & they finde it now  
With trembling for to hang on every bough.  
At this faire fruit, no wonder, if there shall  
Be cudgells flung sometimes, but 't will not fall.

Forsaken TRUTH, Times daughter, groweth here.  
(More pretious fruit, what tree did ever beare?)  
Whose pleasant sight aloft hath many fed,  
And what falls down knocks Error on the head.  
Blinde Novio sayes, that nothing here is True, 61  
Because (thinks he) no old thing can be new.  
Alas poor smoaky Times, that can't yet see,  
Where Truth doth grow, on this or on that Tree.

Few think, who only hear, but doe not see,  
That PLENTY groweth much upon this tree.  
That since the mighty COW her crown hath lost, 67  
In every place shee's made to rule the rost:  
That heaps of Wheat, Pork, Bisket, Beef & Beer,  
Masts, Pipe-staves, Fish should store both farre &  
neer:  
Which fetch in Wines, Cloth, Sweets & good Tobacc-  
O be contented then, you cannot lack.

Of late from this tree's root within the ground  
Rich MINES branch out, Iron & Lead are found,  
Better then Peru's gold or Mexico's  
Which cannot weapon us against our foes,



Nor make us howes, nor siths, nor plough-shares  
mend:

Without which tools mens honest lives would end.  
Some silver-mine, if any here doe wish,  
They it may finde i' th' bellyes of our fish.

But lest this Olive plant in time should wither,  
And so it's fruit & glory end together,  
The prudent Husband-men are pleas'd to spare  
No work or paines, no labour, cost or care,  
A NURSERY to plant, with tender sprigs, 85  
Young shoots & sprouts, small branches, slips &  
twigs;

Whence timely may arise a good supply  
In room of sage & aged ones that dye.

The wildest SHRUBS, that forrest ever bare, 89  
Of late into this Olive, grafted are.  
Welcome poor Natives, from your salvage fold.  
Your hopes we prize above all Western gold.  
Your pray'rs, tears, knowledge, labours promise  
much,

Wo, if you be not, as you promise, such.  
Sprout forth, poor sprigs, that all the world may sing  
How Heathen shrubs kisse Jesus for their King.

From "*An Almanack for the Year of Our Lord*  
 1649 . . . By *Samuel Danforth of Harvard*  
*Colledge Philomathemat: . . . Cambridge.*  
 1649.

(A copy of this Almanack is in the New York Public Library, and a photostat of it is in the Harvard College Library among the Nichols Photostats of early Massachusetts Almanacs.)

In Englands armes, an Orphan once did sit: 1  
 The question was, what should be done with it?  
 Its Step-dame mercilesse would have it sent 3  
 To th' wildernes; the rest all said, content.  
 But when the Fathers Bowels did foresee, 5  
 What sorrows in the wildernes should bee,  
 He went with it: and when through scarcity  
 It cry'd, he heard, & streight-way sent supply.

A four-horn'd Beast this Orphan spying here, 9  
 Threatned forthwith in peices it to teare.  
 Whose hornes not able for to tosse & gore,  
 This Hand shall reach, said he, the Ocean o're.  
 A kennell of stout hounds awakened then,  
 And scar'd this little creature to his den.  
 But lest the Orphan should it alway dread,  
 The hunters hand cut off his horned head.

No sooner was an house here built, to keep  
 This Out-cast dry, where it might rest & sleep,  
 But now an Airy thing above all men 19  
 Would have roofs, walls, foundations down agen,  
 (And shook them sore) that so by rents & strife  
 Without all house-room, it might end its life.  
 Which when the Builders saw, they drave it hence: 23  
 Wherein appear'd a special providence.

But by & by, grave Monanattock rose,  
Grim Sasacus with swarms of Pequottoes,  
Who smote our hindermost, whose arrows stung,  
Who vow'd with English blood their ground to dung.  
But Mistick flames & th' English sword soon  
damps

This rampant crue; pursues them in their swamps,  
And makes them fly their land with fear & shame:  
That th' Indians dread is now the English name.

Just when these hounds first bit, Truth suffers  
scorne, 33

Strange errors bark, the devil winds his horne  
And blows men almost wilde; Opinion  
Within the house would mistresse it alone.  
The poyson kills, makes light, loose, high, divides,  
And would have broke to factions, fractions, sides.  
The Thrones were therefore set, and in that day 39  
When Pequots fly, Opinion hasts away.

Great Earth-quakes frequently (as one relates) 41  
Forerun strange plagues, dearths, wars & change of  
states,

Earth's shaking sits [fits?] by venemous vapours  
here,

How is it that they hurt not, as elsewhere!  
Succeeding ages may interpret well,  
What those mutations are, which these foretell.  
Some think that now they hurt not any men:  
But only those who were not shaken then.

The birds consulted once, who should appear  
Against their enemies in battel heer.  
To strip us of our food was first the plot:  
Upon the Pigeons therefore fell the lot.

Their troops were numberles, darkning the skies,  
 Spoyling the fields in dreadfull companies,  
 When to their losse they thus had took much prey,  
 One sounds retrait, apace they haste away.

The high & mighty states conspired, how 57  
 To cut off all the English at a blow.  
 Be wise, look noble Uncas unto it:  
 Thou canst scarce save thyself by Foxens wit,  
 And by thy fall comes in the English wo,  
 If it may be by Miantonimo.  
 Brave Uncas thinks, he is too high, by th' head, 63  
 And cuts it off; so wee delivered.

Armies of earthly Angels then arose, 65  
 Who from her crown the Summer would depose.  
 They march in mighty troops, from place to place:  
 Pitcht fields fell down before their grizly face.  
 It past all humane skill, how to engage  
 The fowles against the caterpillers rage;  
 But suddenly to-flight, they all prepare;  
 No man knows how, unles it was by pray'r.

An Arrow at noon day here once did fly, 73  
 Which wounded every man & family.  
 This poyson soon the Body overspread,  
 And seiz'd upon the spirits, lungs & head.  
 'T is strange, such brittle vessels did not break,  
 When as the strongest scarce could help the weak.  
 How most were heal'd, some doe not understand,  
 'T was by a touch of one Physicians hand.

While Europe burnes & broiles & dyes in flames,  
 And Englands sobs are heard from Tweed to  
 Thames;

While Irelands ashes up and down do fly,  
And Scotlands tears run down abundantly:  
While poor Barbados cryes; the Pestilence!  
And Virgins-land thrusts out her sons from thence; 86  
The worthles Orphan may sit still and blesse,  
That yet it sleeps in peace and quietnes.

*A Prognostication*

The morning Kings may next ensuing year,	1
With mighty Armies in the aire appear,	
By one mans means there shall be hither sent	3
The Army, Citty, King and Parliament.	
Two that have travel'd round about the earth,	5
Shall by their coming here prevent a dearth.	
A Child but newly born, shall then foretell	7
Great changes in a Winding-sheet; Farewell.	



## NOTES ON THE TEXT





## NOTES ON THE TEXT

### I

- Line* 12. "Content of her lamenting head" — the source of the content of her lamenting husband. For an amusing parallel instance of the use of "head" for "lord" or "husband," cf. John Dunton's *Letters from New England* (ed. 1867), p. 106: "Madam Brick is a Gentlewoman whose *Head* (i. e. her Husband) has been cut off, and yet she lives and walks."
19. *I. e.*, The sweetest titles *that* ever passed between.
34. "Turtle" — turtle-dove, loving mate.
- 41-44. The conceit is drawn from business and legal parlance. Mary Tompson, lent by God to her family on earth, is likened to "a stock in hand," capital, or goods, lent to be returned on demand, in which the borrower has no further right or "interest" after the demand is made. "To give a supersedeas" to anything meant "to check" or "to put an end to." A supersedeas is a writ ordering the stopping of legal proceedings.
45. "Cyes" — Cries.
57. For "foe" read "goe" — two lives go at once as she pants in her death struggle.
61. "Mary's Day" — a pun on Mary and Marah, which in Hebrew means "bitterness." Cf. l. 62, and *Exodus*, xv, 23.

### II

Joseph Tompson writes, immediately after the last words of this poem, "penned by one of her aunts," i. e., by one of Elizabeth Tompson's aunts. Since another poem of her aunt Anna Hayden is extant, and we have no record of any other aunt of hers who was given to versifying, it seems a fair inference that the lines are by Mrs. Hayden. Whether Joseph Tompson's note is meant to apply to the poem and the "supliment" or to

the "suppliment" alone is not clear, but there is no author indicated for the poem, so that probably the aunt, whoever she was, wrote both.

*Line* 16. "To" seems to be a slip for "do."

17-20. These four lines seem to mean: "We see taken hence one who was so young as to have had as good a chance of life as any one of her neighbors."

25. "Sheel" — she'll.

26. "Rain" — reign.

### III

In his journal, at the head of the page on which this poem begins, Joseph Tompson has written, "Deseased in Braintry about 1643." This refers to Abigail Tompson. He has also written in two places above the first line of the poem, "my Dear mother."

The anagram is perfect only if one spells the name Abigaill Tomson and spells all, al; and bliss, blis.

*Line* 10. "Elfe" — a young creature or human being.

23. "Hear" — here.

28. "Third heauens." Cf. 2 *Corinthians*, xii, 2.

59. There is no line to rhyme with this one. Possibly such a line was omitted by Tompson in copying.

### IV

The structure of this poem is not clear. Possibly it is really two poems, the first being ll. 1-46, and the second, "A solitary sigh," being ll. 47-73. If it is one poem — and it seems to be so written in Joseph Tompson's journal — ll. 1-24 contain a speech put into the mouth of Elizabeth Tompson in Heaven. Then (ll. 25-46) her brother moralizes on her death, and cuts off his praises by saying (l. 43), "Proximity of blood makes me for beare," and adds that while all around her join in laudations, and although all commendations possible might be paid to her memory, he will "Drop this tear," which refers to the second part of the poem, ll. 47-73, headed "A solitary sigh." This begins with a soliloquy by the poet, and then at l. 64 introduces another speech of Elizabeth Tompson, purporting to

be her dying words at a time when, apparently, she was admitted to a vision of Heaven before being overtaken by death.

The anagram "o i am blest on top" requires the spellings "o i am blesst on top" and "Elisabot Tompson." Cf., however, Camden, who says that "the precise" in the art of anagram making "are only bold with H either in omitting or retaining it, for that it cannot challenge the right of a letter. But the Licentiats somewhat licentiously, lest they should prejudice poetical liberty, will pardon themselves for doubling or rejecting a letter, if the sense fall aptly, and think it no injury to use E for Æ; V for W; S for Z, and C for K, and contrariwise." See Wheatley, *Of Anagrams*, pp. 145-146.

*Lines* 7, 15. "hear," — here.

26. "Use" means "a practical application," as in a sermon the "use" was the part devoted to practical counsels to be drawn from its doctrine.

34. "Dresser" — vinedresser, who represents here the father of the dead girl.

37-38. Cf. Introduction, pp. xxv-xxvi.

54. "Leand" — learned.

## V

The anagram requires the spellings: "Uillyam Thompson," and "most holy paul min."

*Line* 11. "one" — own.

47. Cf. 2 *Corinthians*, xii, 7-9.

## VI

The anagram is "Uillyam Tompson" and "Lo my iona slumpt."

*Line* 1. "Slumpt" means "fell in" or "sank in." According to the *New English Dictionary* the verb in this sense occurs chiefly in English dialects and in America. Incidentally, the first instance of its use with this sense given in that dictionary is dated 1677, a decade after Wilson's poem.

50. The rhyme demands "spoke" instead of "spake."

*Line 54.* "To return the captivity" is a biblical idiom for "to bring back the captives" or "bring back from captivity," and so means "to release," "to restore." Cf. *Hosea*, vi, 11, and see, e. g., *Job*, xlii, 10, *Psalms*, xiv, 7, and *Jeremiah*, xxx, 3, 18. Cf. also l. 6 in Poem IX on p. 20.

## VII

The division into stanzas is not made in the copy in Tompson's journal, but seems obviously dictated by the structure of the poem.

*Line 7.* "By" — be.

## VIII

The anagram is distinctly inaccurate here. "William Tompson" might give "Lo now I'm past il," and in the version of the poem printed in *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, xxx, 283, the phrase is "Lo now I'm past il." That version, printed from a manuscript belonging to the Society, agrees with the text in this book, except in spelling and punctuation.

For the authorship of this poem, see the note below, under IX.

*Line 4.* "Black Coller" — melancholy. "Strangullion" — strangury.

## IX

To be exact the anagram would have to be "Now I am slipt hom" and "Wiliam Thompson." The text of the poem as printed in this book agrees with that in the Massachusetts Historical Society version (*Proceedings*, xxx, 284), except for one word, noted below.

Both VIII and IX are, almost certainly, by Danforth. They appear on one page of Joseph Tompson's journal, separated only by a broken line. Longer broken lines divide them from Torrey's poem which precedes them, and Tompson's "Epitaph" which follows. Both have been printed before, and the first has been printed twice, most recently by Professor Hall,

who ascribes it to Benjamin Tompson. The evidence for this ascription seems to be simply that the verses are included in the Tompson manuscript owned by the Massachusetts Historical Society, and are not there assigned to any author, which suggests that they were written by some member of the family and, because of their quality, by Benjamin. Joseph Tompson's journal sheds more light, however. In it the two anagrams are set off by themselves, and are numbered 1 and 2; and Danforth's name appears after the second. The numbering links them, just as Wilson's anagrams on Tompson, printed above, and his verses on Shepard, also included in this book, are linked. Moreover, the two poems are identical in form. If one was by Tompson, or by anyone other than Danforth, why was it coupled with one signed by him? Why was it numbered 1 and his 2, and why was it not assigned to an author as are the other poems in the journal? It seems obvious that Joseph Tompson put the two poems together, numbered them, and thought it unnecessary to put the author's name anywhere else than at the end of the second. There is no reason to suspect Tompson's ascription, for he was in a far better position than anyone now can be to know who composed the verses he copied. It should be noted, too, that the manuscript at the Massachusetts Historical Society also numbers the two anagrams 1 and 2, and puts Danforth's name after the second. Evidently the two belong together, and their being coupled is best explained by regarding them as companion pieces from the same pen.

*Line 6.* Cf. p. 118, note to l. 54.

12. For "exp̄rienc" the version in the *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, xxx, 284, has "Expression."

## X

*Line 3.* The printed version, from the Massachusetts Historical Society manuscript, has "lacks" for "wants." See *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, xxx, 283.

6. The "uירים" represent the other preachers, and the allusion is to the foolish virgins in *Matthew*, xxv.

## XI

*Line 31.* The authoress changes abruptly here from addressing her subject as "you" to writing about him as "he."

## THE SONG OF DELIVERANCE

*To the "Christian Reader"*

The John Wilson who signs this was the son of John, the author of the "Song."

*The Introduction*

The brackets in the text appear in the original, and seem to be designed to set off those parts of the poem which are added to, or not definitely drawn from, the Biblical account. For example, cf. ll. 1-16 with *Deuteronomy*, xxxi, 16, 17, (Geneva version, London, 1584): "And the Lorde sayde unto Moses, Beholde, thou shalt sleepe with thy fathers, and this people wil rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of a strange land (whither they go to dwell therein,) and will forsake mee, and breake my couenant which I haue made with them. Wherefore my wrath will waxe hote against them at that day, and I will forsake them, and wil hide my face from them." In ll. 98, 100, and 102, however, the brackets seem to be used simply in lieu of parentheses.

*Lines 80-96.* Cf. *Revelation*, iii, 14-18.

(1588)

In this, as in the other sections of the *Song of Deliverance*, some passages from prose accounts of the events described by Wilson are cited, to show his dependence on his sources, and his close following of them. No attempt has been made to note all the places in which he draws from others, nor are the prose works mentioned necessarily his precise sources. They are referred to simply as typical books out of the many to which he could, and doubtless often did, go for his material, and, at times, for his phrasing.



- Lines 5-6. Cf. John Speed, *History of Great Britaine*, 1611, p. 858: "The Seas were turretted with such a Nauy of ships; as her swelling waues could hardly be seene."
- 13-14. *Ibid.*: "Mules and Horses."
- 25-30. *Ibid.*: "Whips, and butcherly kniues, for what vse wee may imagine."
69. It is not clear why Wilson puts this line and those which follow, as well as many other passages in his verses, in quotation marks. Possibly he means to indicate thus his paraphrases from other writers; in some cases he seems to set off lyric apostrophes in this way, and sometimes, of course, quotation marks are used in the normal fashion, to indicate a direct speech.
- 73-74. Cf. W. Camden, *Annales*, 1625, book iii, p. 256: "Publisheth in print the [*Crusado*]."
83. *Id.*, iii, 255.
89. *Id.*, iii, 283: "And surely, *Bernard Mendoza*, with great pride and vanity sung forth in France . . . the triumph before the victory."
- 91-92. The brackets are in the original text, and seem to be used in place of inverted commas to indicate a quotation within a quotation. For an example of the use of brackets as quotation marks, cf. Richard Baxter, *The Certainty of the World of Spirits*, London, 1691, pp. 44, 58, 99, 108.
- 103-108. Camden, iii, 267-68: "The *English* came within ken of the *Spanish ARMADA*, built high like Towres and Castles, rallied into the forme of a Crescent, whose horns were at least seuen miles distant, comming slowly on, and although vnder full sayles, yet as though the windes laboured, and the Ocean sighed vnder the burthen of it."
- 121-132. Cf. *Id.*, iii, 268: "*Drake, Hawkins, Furbisher*, peale terribly vpon the Reare which *Ricaldus* commanded."
140. The brackets about this line indicate a quotation within a quotation.
- 153-180. Cf. Camden, iii, 279: "The Admirall sent eight of his worst Shippes, dawbed on the out-sides with Greeke Pitch and Rosin, & filled full of sulphure, and other materials suddenly combustible . . . with a

full gale of wind directly vpon the *Spanish Armada*; which, as the *Spaniards* saw approach neerer and neerer to them, (the flame shining ouer all the Sea) thinking those burning ships besides the danger of the fire, to be filled with some deadly Engines; with a howling and fearefull outcry, weyed anchor, cut their Cables, hoysed their sayles, cried out vpon their rowers, and, strooke with a horrible and a pannique feare, with impetuous haste betooke themselues to a confused flight."

*Lines* 185-186. See passage quoted in note to ll. 197-204 below.

193-194. Camden, iii, 283: "Commanded *Seimer* and the *Hollanders*, to keepe the Coasts of *Flanders*."

197-204. *Ibid.*: "The Duke of *Parma* hauing paid his vow to our Lady of *Halle*, came to *Dunkerke*, but too late, and was there receiued by the *Spaniards* with reproach, as if . . . hee had willingly caused them to lose so faire an occasion to execute their enterprise."

205. "Where" — were.

215. "Their *Balaam*" — the Pope.

218. "Where" — were.

240. "Parting them a stake" — giving them a share.

245. "Elder hue." "Hue" is vaguely used here; "older sort," "older fashion" gives the meaning of the phrase.

254. "Put to foyle" — foil, defeat.

289-292. Camden, iii, 278: "Now was the number of the *English* Ships come to bee one hundred and forty, swift of sayle, & apt to cast about to take any aduantage, and yet there were not aboue fiftene of them, which bore the weight and burthen of the Warre, and repelled it."

293-294. *Id.*, iii, 284: "Nor no Ship but *Cocks Barke* onely lost."

297-298. *Ibid.*: "With the losse of many men, (and not of aboue one hundred *English*.)"

305-312. *Id.*, iii, 285: "Many of their Ships were lost vpon the Coasts of *Ireland* and *Scotland*, where some seuen hundred Souldiers and Mariners were cast ashore, who, at the request of the Duke of *Parma*,

vnto the King of *Scotland* in their behalfe, and by the Queenes permission were passed into *Flanders* a yeere after. But those poor wretches which were cast away in *Ireland*, were not so mercifully dealt withall: for some of them were slaine by the *Irish* dwelling in the woods; the other, by the commandement of the Deputy, who . . . sent *Fowle*, the second *Marshall*, who . . . cut off the heads of about two hundred."

*Lines* 313-316. *Id.*, iii, 284: "Thus did this *Fleete* returne . . . which was preparing three whole yeeres . . . after hauing beene fought withall so oftentimes in one Moneth, and then put to flight."

323. Speed, p. 862: "The residue of his ships, about forty in number." This, in Speed, does not refer to the number of ships which got back to Spain "to their own Havens-bar," but it is possible Wilson hastily misread the passage.

349-356. Cf. Camden, iii, 286.

359-360. See Philemon Holland's translation of Plutarch's *Moralia*, 1603, p. 238: "When the Satyre would have kissed and embraced fire the first time that ever he saw it, *Prometheus* admonished him and said:

*Thou wilt bewaile thy goats-beard soone,*

*If thou it touch, t'will burne anon."*

The same tale is alluded to in *Euphues* and elsewhere in books of the time. Cf. Sir Edward Dyer's:

"Prometheus when firste frome heauen hye

He broughte downe fyre, 'ere then on earthe not seene,

Fond of Delight, a Satyre standing bye

Gaue it a kyss, as it lyke Sweete had bene.

Feelinge forthwithe the other's burninge powre,

Wood with the smarte, with shoutes and shreakinge shrill,

He soughte his ease in riuer, feilde and bowre." — *The Writings of Sir Edward Dyer*, ed. Grosart, 1872, p. 37.

See also *Classical Philology*, iv, 433 ff.

1603

*Line* 34. "The London-bill." Bills of Mortality were issued at this time in London, and these enumerate the deaths from the plague.

1605

It is not easy to determine Wilson's chief source for his narrative of the Gunpowder Plot, but much of it might have been drawn from *The Gunpowder Treason: With a Discourse of the Manner of its Discovery*, published in 1606, reprinted in 1679, and again at London in 1850. To the last edition some references are made in the notes below, when passages in it correspond closely with Wilson's version. The book is referred to in the notes as G. T.

*Lines* 5-8. Cf. G. T. p. 85.

11. *Id.*, p. 87.

21-22. *Id.*, p. 61.

24. "Lists" — arts, stratagems. The English have used mining stratagems against the Catholics, by passing cruel laws; now the Catholics will meet these mines by countermines. Professor Kittredge points out that the figure is almost the same as in *Hamlet*, iii, 4:

"'t shall go hard

But I will delve one yard below their mines,  
And blow them at the moon. O, 't is most sweet,  
When in one line two crafts directly meet."

*The New English Dictionary* has no example of this use of "list" that is nearly so recent as Wilson's. Probably he knew the older sense of the word through reading in older English.

26-27. *I. e.*, Who, except a Catholic priest would call too severe a law which allows such rascals as these Catholic priests to live at all?

30. "Bit" — bite.

38. Cf. G. T., p. 58: "He first found . . . barrels of powder . . . to the number of thirty-six barrels."

43. An allusion to "March beer."

45. Clearly an allusion to the celebration of Christmas as "popish."

- Line* 49. Cf. G. T., p. 62: "Covered the same with billets and faggots."
- 50-52. *Id.*, p. 116: "Crows of iron, stones, . . . laid upon the barrels, to have made the breach the greater."
- 57-58. *Id.*, p. 58.
58. "Spickets" — spigots, for the barrels of powder. This continues the brewing figure used in ll. 41-48.
60. "Closely sided" — closely allied.
- 61-74. G. T., pp. 76-79.
76. "Deface" — destroy.
- 81-82. G. T., p. 86.
- 91-92. At this time "Puritan" was clearly a derogatory word. Cf. Speed, p. 891, paragraph 48.
97. "Gull" — a deceitful trick.
- 99-100. The quotation marks are used here to set off a moralizing side reflection.
115. "Dag" — a sort of heavy pistol; "Fig" — a poisoned fig, or poison in general.
156. "Affronted" — encountered, attacked.
- 165-174. Cf. G. T., p. 81.
167. "Convince" — convict.
168. "Practising" — plotting.
- 181-186. Cf. G. T., p. 128.
- 189-196. The quotation marks about these lines seem to indicate simply a parenthetical observation of the author, but they may possibly be intended to mark a biblical allusion. Cf. *Obadiah*, 4.
- 229-232. Cf. G. T., pp. 81-82.
235. "Roisting" — roistering.
- 238-240. After Garnet was executed there was circulated a story that a straw, wet by his blood, developed an image of him. Some early portraits of him show this straw. The brackets are in the original text.
- 255 ff. Cf. note to ll. 189-196.
- 317-320. Here the quotation marks seem to be used merely in lieu of parentheses.
- 321-322. See *The Dolefull Euen-Song*, London 1623, p. 5, which says that the event which Wilson is about to relate, "fell upon the fift of *Nouember* by the *Gregorian* Kalender."

1623

There are several pamphlet accounts of the episode described under this heading. Probably the one which Wilson used most was *The Dolefull Euen-Song*, London 1623, referred to in these notes as D.; but he may also have consulted *The Fatall Vesper*, London 1623, (cf. l. 15), and *Something Written by occasion of that fatall and memorable accident in the Blacke Friers*, London 1623.

- Line* 5. Cf. D., p. 1, "in a large Garret."  
 9. Cf. *Id.*, p. 2, "to the number of two or three hundred persons."  
 22. The name of the mystical Babylon (Hebrew: *Babel*) of the Apocalypse was often applied to Rome or the papal power.  
 25-26. Cf. D. p. 4: "As soone as he came to the Chaire, kneeled downe at the foot of it."  
 29-30. *Ibid.*: "A short praier, as it seemed, about the length of an *Aue Marie*."  
 38-44. Cf. *Id.*, pp. 9-10.  
 45-46. Cf. *Id.*, p. 3, "An Houre-glasse. An Embleme not vnfit."  
 48. For "dy" read "by."  
 65. Cf. D., p. 25, "Betweene 90. and 100."  
 69-72. *Id.*, p. 12: "Of the Gallery floare onely so much fell, as was directly ouer a Chamber of twenty foot square, called *Father Redyates* Chamber, and being the vsuall Massing roome for the English resorting thither."  
 79-80. Cf. *Numbers*, xvi, 30-33; *Psalms*, cvi, 17.  
 82-84. "Block here means a body without limbs. Cf. *1 Samuel*, v, 4; *Judges*, xvi, 23 ff.  
 97-100. The quotation marks about these lines are used to set off a side reflection on the part of the author.  
 101-108. Cf. D., pp. 17-18: "It was giuen out by some presently . . . that some Protestants . . . had secretly drawne out the pins, or sawed halfe asunder some of the supporting Timber."



*Lines* 113-116. Cf. *Id.*, p. 18: "The most probable apparant cause of the suddaine failing of that floare, charged with such a weight of people, was iudged to bee in the maine Sommier thereof, which being not aboue ten inches square, had in the very place, where it brake, on each side a mortaise hole directly opposite the one against the other, into which were let the Tenants of two great pieces of Timber, called Girders: so that betweene those Mortaises, there was left not aboue three inches of Timber."

119-120. Cf. *D.*, p. 12.

129. This line suggests that the quotation marks in the preceding lines — and probably elsewhere in the poem — indicate parentheses or digressions.

130. *I. e.*: "Whether one use the Old or the New Style of reckoning dates." Cf. page 125, note to ll. 321-322.

140. "Bone fires" are, of course, "bonfires."

147-148. Cf. *Psalms*, lxxxv, 10.

162. In 1624 Charles I, then Prince of Wales, fell from his horse, but escaped injury. See O. Ogle and W. H. Bliss, *Calendar of the Clarendon State Papers*, Vol. i, Appendix 1, p. 4. In the preceding lines Wilson is alluding to events of the years 1623 to 1626.

167. "Hue and size" seems to mean "color and sizing," in the painter's sense, and to be used figuratively.

## 1625

In his comments on the plague of 1625 Wilson may well have drawn on his own experience, and must also have been well informed by the Bills of Mortality and other current publications.

*Line* 15. Cf. *Ezekiel*, xxvi, 20.

19. "Tearmer" or "termer" means "one who resorted to London in term, either for business at a court of law, or for amusements, intrigues, or dishonest practices." Wilson refers to litigants. In 1625 the high court of chancery, the court of exchequer, the courts of the king's bench, common pleas, wards and liveries, etc., were moved to Reading. See J. Man, *History of Reading* (1816), p. 24.



*Line* 57. "The Liberties" — the districts outside the limits of London but subject to control by the London municipal authorities.

173. "Our Town" — Sudbury.

189. "Cry" here means "report," "rumor," or it may mean "outcry against," as in *Ezekiel*, ix, 4.

280. "feet" — a misprint for "seet" or "seat."

*Deo Bisultori Saxum*

This poem, and that which follows, as is shown by the first line of each and by the translations which follow them, were intended as companion pieces.

*Ad memoriam*

*Line* 19. "rtriq"; should be "utriq."

*To God Our Twice-Revenger*

*Line* 13. "Alone-torne" — *i. e.*, a lone, torn (broken, split) ship.

17. The brackets are in the original text.

18. "Put them to foile" — defeated them. See page 122 above note to line 254.

45-48. "There should be one standard for the sin and its punishment, but both sin and punishment are immeasurable. If praise should be suitable for God's grace, there should be one standard for both, but one who receives God's grace must set no limit to his praise."

*Translation of Beza*

*Line* 9. "Dition" — empire, realm.

*In Pientissimum Johannem Harvardum*

The anagram is perfect if one "h" in the proper name is ignored, and if "v" is used interchangeably with "u."

For some comments on this poem in relation to the facts of Harvard's life, see *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, xii, 8, 42 note, 43 note. It is translated in the 1853 edition of the *Magnalia*.

*A Fragment on the Death of Samuel Danforth*

The first-born of Samuel Danforth and Mary (Wilson) Danforth, was Samuel, born January 14, 1653, and baptized by Wilson in Boston on January 16. He died when he was six months old. (See Savage, ii, 8.) The Danforths had ten other children, all daughters save John, born in November, 1660; a second Samuel, born December 10, 1666, and Thomas, born April 3, 1672, after Wilson's death. Why Cotton Mather calls the subject of this poem the "only Child" is not clear unless he meant to expound what is obvious — that, at the time he was born, little Samuel was the only child.

*Line 2.* "Only Son" in 1653, when he died.

*On Joseph Brisco*

*Line 2.* The semicolon after "Christ" should have been put at the end of the line.

*Paradisus Hostem?*

The anagram is perfect if "Tomas" instead of "Thomas" is used.

*Line 9.* "atas" — ætas.

*Arm'd as the Shop*

*Line 38.* When Wilson wrote, two of Shepard's sons, Thomas and Samuel, were successful New England ministers.

*Nonne is Honoratus?*

As printed in Shepard's book, this anagram, and that which follows, bear no indication of authorship; but Cotton Mather, in the *Magnalia* (book iii, part 1, chapter ii, paragraph 22), speaks of "Mr. Wilson's Anagrammatising of JOHANNES NORTONUS into *Nonne is Honoratus*." Since Mather was probably well informed, the anagram and the Latin poem upon it may be accepted as Wilson's. The anagrams which follow are numbered 2 and 3, and seem thus to be linked with the *Nonne is Honoratus?*, so that they, too, are presumably by Wilson. The anagram which appears next in the 1664 volume, headed *To the same purpose*, is signed with Wilson's name, and

is, in part, a translation of the *Nonne is Honoratus?*, making it seem probable that the latter was Wilson's, too.

*To the Same Purpose*

The anagram is perfect, using J and I interchangeably.

Line 23. "us"—as.

33-100. These lines are a free translation of the *Nonne is Honoratus?*

134. "Morelliamisme." Jean Morelli maintained "the general right of voting at ecclesiastical elections," a doctrine condemned at a French national synod in 1562. See the *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (1909), iii, 1.

147. *I. e.*, John Cotton first, and then John Norton.

193. Norton's second wife was Mary Mason.

194-195. Cf. *St. John*, xx, 16. The brackets are in the original.

*March*

The key to the riddle in this stanza is not clear, since it is not easy to say who, or what, the "Coal-white Bird" represents. "Coal-white" may mean "black-white" or perhaps "black and white," or it may mean "ash white," "coal" in the sense of "ash" being possible at this period. Cf. *New English Dictionary*, "Coal," *sb.*, 2b. If the word means "black-white," the verse might conceivably refer to white men among the Indians, especially white ministers clothed in black. Another seventeenth century riddle (J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, *The Literature of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 1851, p. 82) reads:

"What is that, as white as snow,  
And yet as blacke as any crow;  
And more plyant then a wand,  
And is tied in a silken band,  
And every day a prince's peer  
Looketh upon it with sad cheere?"

and refers to a book. Possibly Danforth's "Coal-white bird" represents a book, appearing in the spring.

If "Coal-white" means simply "white," the bird may be conscience, or God's grace, or, perhaps, the fever common in

the spring in colonial New England. (Cf. J. Winthrop, *History*, 1853, ii, 378.) White was an adjective sometimes applied to fevers. The *New English Dictionary* gives two quotations, one from Clanvowe's *Cuckow and Night* (c. 1403):

"I am so shaken with the fevers whyte,  
Of al this May yet slepte I but a lyte,"

and the other from Lydgate's *Chronicle of Troy*: "While he laie þus in his þrowes white." If by the bird Danforth means fever, then his last line "Only to shake you by your hands" becomes a play on words, referring to the shaking caused by disease. This would be quite in tune with his play on "together by the eares" in his almanack verse for August.

### April

Probably that "which hath neither tongue nor wings," but sings in April, is a brook, and the allusion in the stanza is to those who, having been sick during the winter, grow better as spring comes.

### May

"White Coates" and "Blew-coates" seem to be arbitrarily used to represent two opposing factions likely to be on different sides at the May elections in Massachusetts. White was associated early with royalist and legitimist causes, and the "White Coates" seem to be those residents of New England who, being dissatisfied with the Puritan régime, attacked it with a plea for tolerance, at least of their own religious views. The histories of the colony in this period give the details of all this. "Ana-tolleratorist" seems here to mean one who is in favor of tolerance, and is probably used as a thin disguise for "Anabaptist," a name little loved in Puritan Massachusetts. In any case, the point of the verse is clear, as is its appeal for intolerance where intolerance seemed necessary.

### June

"This spring of gardens" or "fountain which feeds gardens" is, of course, the colony. The stanza is a dialogue. In ll. 1-2 the orthodox speak. In ll. 2-3 those who disagree with them say: "Why should we have to accept your faith? Give losers leave to think what they wish," which means, "Let the

minority, or those not in power, choose the creed they prefer." That "loosers" means "losers" here is plain, for there is a proverb: "Give losers leave to speak," etc., which means that the winner should allow the loser to complain of his lot, and should not expect him to be silent. Ll. 5-6 contain the reply of the orthodox.

### *July*

The "Birds" are obviously the ships bringing supplies.

### *August*

The verse refers to the harvesting of the ears of corn by the Indians and the English.

### *September*

The confederacy of four New England colonies had been formed some years before, and each of the four sent commissioners to a meeting on the first Thursday of each September. See J. G. Palfrey, *History of New England*, i, 632. This makes plain the reference to the meeting of "four heads." The last two lines are not so clear. The sense seems to be that the representatives of the four colonies should discuss how to bring "honey" (profit or food) to the "little Bees" by encouraging fisheries. Legislation dealing with fisheries was common at this time. It is hard to be sure just what "making fish to dance on trees" refers to, but perhaps "trees" is used for "stakes" and refers to the stakes supporting the hurdles or frames on which fish were dried. Or were fish ever dried by being strung up between trees? Or were nets across streams ever tied to trees on the banks? The chickens are the colonists; the kite, their enemies. "Idle drones" are presumably various undesirable citizens, and the "little Bees" the good ones.

### *October*

There is an interesting reference here to the cutting of large trees in New England forests. For "King Bramble" see *Judges*, ix, 8-15.

### *November*

This humorous mock prophecy is quite in the vein of many others to be found in almanacks of the seventeenth century and later.

December

The "enemy" is the cold of winter.

January

The maker of the bridges is the cold, which freezes the bays and streams.

February

This verse is simply a general reflection on the wisdom of the industrious colonists and the folly of the idle ones.

Danforth's 1648 Almanack Poem

- Line 3. The plant represents the colony.  
 9. The "Husband-man" seems to represent God or Christ.  
 16. Probably a reference to the spring elections in Massachusetts.  
 25. Astraea, goddess of equity, innocence, metamorphosed into the constellation Virgo.  
 32. "Grinde" probably means "be put to hard labor in prison." See *Judges*, xvi, 21; and cf. *Lamentations*, v, 13.  
 61. "Blinde Novio." Novius, an upstart newcomer, appears in Horace (*Satires*, I, vi, 40).  
 67. "The mighty Cow" is probably an allusion to the worship of the calf, or cow, in *Exodus*.  
 85. "A NURSERY" — Harvard College.  
 89. "The wildest SHRUBS" — the Indians.

Danforth's 1649 Almanack Poem

- Line 1. The "Orphan" seems to represent Puritanism, or the Puritans, or, more specifically, the Independents who came to New England.  
 3. The "step-dame" seems to mean the Church of England.  
 5. The Father is God.  
 9. The "four-horn'd Beast" typifies some European or English enemy of the colony — possibly the English Bishops, or the ardent anti-Puritans. The "stout hounds" may represent hostile Indians, or other agents of the colonists' adversaries.



- Line* 19. "An Airy thing" — the great storm of 1635. Cf. Winthrop, *History*, under date of August 16, 1635.
23. "The Builders" — God and His angels?
29. The Pequots were defeated by the English at Mystic in 1637.
33. This stanza refers to the difficulties with the Antinomians, Anne Hutchinson and others.
39. Cf. *Psalms*, cxxii, 5.
41. There were earthquakes in 1638 and 1642, mentioned by Winthrop.
48. *I. e.*, "Only those who did not hear God's warning expressed by the earthquake."
49. "The pigeons came in such flocks, . . . that beat down, and eat up a very great quantity of all sorts of English grain." Winthrop, *History* (1853), ii, 113.
57. For the events alluded to in this stanza, see *Id.*, ii, 157, 158.
63. "He" refers to Miantonimo, enemy of Uncas.
65. For the plague of caterpillars in New England, see Johnson, *History*, Book iii, Chapter 8.
73. The "Arrow at noon day" (cf. *Psalms*, xci, 5, 6) refers to the epidemic of 1647. See Winthrop, ii, 378.
86. "Virgins-land" — Virginia. Of Virginia, Winthrop wrote (ii, 198) in 1644, "They had driven out the godly ministers we had sent to them, and had made an order that all such as would not conform to the discipline of the church of England should depart the country by a certain day."

#### *A Prognostication*

- Line* 1. "The morning Kings" — planets, morning stars? And are the "mighty Armies" the other stars?
- 3-4. It is not easy to unriddle these two lines. Do they mean that the colony will have a complete government by "one man's means," *i. e.*, in its governor?
- 5-6. Are the "two" the sun and moon?
- 7-8. Is the "Child but newly born" the year 1649, which, when in its winding-sheet, as the "Old Year," shall foretell great changes?







PS

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Murdock.

M94

Handkerchiefs from Paul.

63792.

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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## Date Due

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